FIRST ISSUE OF THE NEW BI-MONTHLY

DISSENT

CEASE FIRE!

We propose that the U.S. government declare in favor of an immediate cease-fire. Nothing less will do if the mounting slaughter is to be stopped, nothing less than a forthright declaration to the world that as of a certain date the U.S. proposes that the shooting stop and, as a token of good-will, it immediately ceases the bombing of North Vietnam. One way this could, or could have, occurred

(continued on page 5)

a first hand report by Marshall Sahlins

THE DESTRUCTION OF CONSCIENCE IN VIETNAM

PROTEST

Opinions and Proposals on Strategies of Opposition: Kenneth Boulding, Michael Walzer, Tom Kahn, others

POLITICS

Emanuel Geltman and Stanley Plastrik on Coalition, Tom Hayden on "The Movement"

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1966 75c.

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AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

With this issue, DISSENT *becomes a bi-monthly.*

It will now appear during the first week of January, March, May, July, September and November.

Individual copies will cost 75¢. A one-year subscription will cost $4.50; a two-year subscription, $7. A one-year student subscription will be $3.50.

For DISSENT, *and indeed the cause of democratic radicalism in the United States, this represents a significant step forward. We believe that the political situation—the debate over the Vietnam war, the rise of student rebelliousness, the discussion over poverty, the continued urgency of the civil rights movement—requires that the voice of the democratic left in the U.S. be heard more frequently and more forcefully.*

Liaison With LID

Meanwhile we are pleased to announce that, beginning in 1966, DISSENT *will enter into a close working relationship with the League for Industrial Democracy. Long an important educational agency, the LID has recently undergone a revitalization under the leadership of Michael Harrington and Tom Kahn. (A report on its activities will appear in the March 1966 issue.) In the projected relationship,* DISSENT *and the LID will continue to be entirely distinct, with* DISSENT *preserving its editorial freedom and autonomy, and the LID continuing its work as an educational society. We will cooperate, however, in a program that will include the publication of pamphlets, the holding of public forums, and the*

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arrangement of educational conferences. Members of the LID will be able to receive DISSENT *under a special arrangement, and subscribers to* DISSENT *will be informed of LID activities.*

With Your Help

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DISSENT is a journal devoted to the ideas and values of democratic socialism. It seeks to serve as a forum for writers devoted to these ideas and values, while also welcoming a wide variety of other opinions. Each writer speaks for himself; there is no effort made to exact editorial consensus or uniformity.

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PROTEST

A section of comments, opinions, and proposals on strategies of protest concerning Vietnam and related issues

1. Cease Fire!

continued from front cover

would be for the U.S. to propose that the Vietcong suggestion of a 12 hour Christmas cease-fire be extended indefinitely. Another way that has been suggested by leaders of Turn Toward Peace is that the U.S. declare a "unilateral cease-fire," that is, declare that as of a certain date it will freeze military positions and no longer attack Vietcong troops, and that it proposes the Vietcong reciprocate.

Given a cease-fire, it would be possible to begin peace negotiations. These would be torturous; they might come to an unhappy political conclusion; they might even collapse. But meanwhile the killing would have stopped.

Would Hanoi and the Vietcong respond positively? There can be no certain answer. We do believe that such a proposal from Washington would place the Communists under heavy world-wide pressure, as there would be significant tendencies within the disarranged Communist camp favoring acquiescence.

By spring there may be 500,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam, apart from air and naval personnel. The casualty rate goes up: it now approaches 250 a week for the Americans alone. At home reactionaries have begun to raise the slogan of bombing Hanoi and Haiphong, a piece of demagogy certain Americans, fearful for the lives of their sons and therefore ready to entertain fantasies of quick victory, might find hard to resist.

The North Vietnamese are moving regular army divisions into combat. Pressure on the Soviet Union to increase its military involvement grows each day. There are reports that it may decide to send ground-to-ground rockets, capable of long-range bombardment of U.S. army and air concentrations in the South. Surely if the U.S. increases its military force in Vietnam, it will become harder and harder for the Russians to maintain the relatively restrained posture they have shown thus far. This mutual escalation is the path to madness and blood.

Meanwhile both sides equivocate, both lie. The State Department

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is forced to admit (with a comic cadenza about Dean Rusk's antennae) that in September 1964 America turned down an opportunity to hold secret peace talks with Hanoi, under UN auspices. This makes nonsense, to put it kindly, of President Johnson's statement on August 3 that "In 20 months we have agreed to 15 different approaches to try to bring peace, and each . . . has been turned down by the other side."

The reports coming out of Hanoi are confusing, perhaps deliberately so. It is hard to know whether the Vietnamese Communists—North and/or South— insist that the withdrawal of U.S. troops be a pre-condition for negotiations or propose it as an aim to be realized through negotations. If Hanoi means the first, then in effect it is declaring its agreement with President Johnson and Secretary McNamara that the war will be lengthy. If Hanoi means the second, it is raising, for reasons of its own, a quite legitimate point.

In any case, why do both sides fail to call each other's bluff? Why does not one or the other say: "You claim to favor negotiations? Very well, we will take you at your word. Let us immediately put an end to the shooting and the bombing, and then let us proceed, under the UN or Geneva Conference auspices, to work out a settlement."

Until Washington or Hanoi says something like this, we cannot place much confidence in their protestations to favoring peace.

The United States, however, has *a special responsibility* to take the initiative in proposing a cease-fire. It is the most powerful nation in the world; it claims to speak in behalf of democracy; and it is fighting on foreign soil, plunging steel and napalm into a foreign nation. It should take the lead toward peace, a settlement leading toward the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Vietnam.

Meanwhile, it is of the greatest importance for the peace movement to keep insisting that public officials speak with candor. What is the true extent of U.S. casualties in Vietnam? Was there, as has been reported, an indirect response from Hanoi, through France, after the five-day pause in U.S. bombing of North Vietnam? Discussion of such questions—there are many more—must be brought into the open.

If the war continues, if the war grows in magnitude, and we do not as a nation exhaust every opportunity to bring about a cease-fire, the U.S. will bear a terrible responsibility. Consider a report in *The New York Times,* November 30, by Neil Sheehan, which describes the shelling of Duchai, a complex of fishing hamlets, by the U.S. fleet these past two months. "Reasonable estimates" of the dead—civilians, not soldiers—come to 600. The wounded are "believed much higher than 600." Most of the 15,000 inhabitants have fled the town, and its "solid brick and

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stucco houses . . . have been reduced to rubble or blasted into skeletons."

Is that how the U.S. is bringing "freedom" to Asia? Is that how Communism is being "stopped?" Where is the American conscience? How can we tolerate a policy that will multiply the Duchais by the hundreds, and its dead by the thousands?

Honor, common sense, humanity, political intelligence—all require that this country declare itself unambiguously for an immediate cease-fire. Toward that end we must strain our every effort. I.H.

2. The Vietnam Protest Movement

Late in November a group of socialists, several of them editors of DISSENT, *issued a statement concerning problems faced by the Vietnam protest movement. The signers of this statement were Michael Harrington, Bayard Rustin, Lewis Coser, Penn Kimble and Irving Howe. Parts of the statement have become dated: e. g., a section dealing with attitudes toward the draft. But the central section of the statement, dealing with the Vietnam movement, remains pertinent and appears below.*

The Vietnam protest movement—inchoate and without structure, but drawing upon deep sentiments of moral idealism—faces some serious decisions. There is a tendency, composed mainly of students but also drawing upon a few professors and non-academic ideological advisors, to transform the protest into an apocalypse, a "final conflict," in which extreme gestures of opposition will bring forth punitive retaliation from the authorities. Such a policy, appealing to sectarian ultimatism and impatience, is certain to produce a great deal of publicity but not much public support or political impact. It would "prove," in the eyes of its supporters, various theses about the irrevocability of the reactionary course the U.S. has taken in foreign policy, the fascistic mentality of the "power elite," etc., etc. Such questionable theoretical satisfactions would not, however, compensate for a failure to affect the actual course of events.

We believe there is a possibility of building a significant protest move-

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ment against the current policy in Vietnam. Such a movement would require agreement upon a reasonable program of "demands" appropriate to the present situation; it would require an appeal to large numbers of people not yet involved in any protest actions, including some in the labor, Negro, church, and academic communities who lend formal assent to the Johnson policy but might be persuaded to support *specific* proposals leading to a peaceful settlement in Vietnam. One prerequisite for such a movement is that it clearly indicate that its purpose is to end a cruel and futile war, not to give explicit or covert political support to the Vietcong. This is both a tactical necessity and a moral obligation, since any ambiguity on this score makes impossible, as well as undeserved, the support of large numbers of the American people.

The protest movement cannot be organized around a full-scale analysis of the Vietnam situation; its task is not to assign historical responsibility for the present disaster to one or another side, nor to undertake study in depth of the Asian crisis. Such an analysis, bound to evoke many disagreements, cannot be the basis for common action; each participant, each group or individual who joins to protest the current policy of the Johnson Administration can provide such analyses independently, apart from the immediate joint action. At the same time, it seems to us somewhat sterile and perhaps a little disingenuous to demonstrate under a slogan so vague and unfocussed—e.g., the one employed in the recent New York parade, "Stop the War in Vietnam"—that it provides no guidelines for action and could even, for that matter, be formally accepted by those who approve of the current Administration policy.

We would therefore suggest the following proposals as a basis for common action:

a) We urge the U.S. immediately to cease bombing North Vietnam;

b) We urge the U.S. to declare its readiness to negotiate with the NLF, the political arm of the Vietcong;

c) We urge the U.S. to propose to Hanoi and the Vietcong an immediate cease-fire as a preliminary to negotiations;

d) We urge that the U.S. recognize the right of the South Vietnamese freely to determine their own future, whatever it may be, without interference from foreign troops, and possibly under United Nations supervision;

e) We urge Hanoi and the Vietcong to accept a proposal for a ceasefire and to declare themselves ready for immediate and unconditional negotiations.

The advantage of this program, we believe, is that it points toward a line of action, somewhat like that advocated by Senator Fulbright, which could satisfy the central need of the movement: an end to the blood-letting. It allows people of widely varying opinions to work together for a common objective, even while maintaining their separate valuations of what has been happening in Asia. And it may enable the protest movement to win support for these objectives from people who have given reluctant or partial or merely token support to the Johnson policy.

While we believe that civil dis-

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obedience is a legitimate, if ultimate, means of registering dissent and statements of conscience in a democratic society, we would urge that it be employed only after intense reflection and a full resort to other, more "normal" methods. Civil disobedience by its very nature, must in a democratic society be an exceptional measure; if employed as a routine tactic, it becomes self-defeating and destructive.

Analogies sometimes advanced with the Civil Rights struggle in the South are largely misleading. Civil Rights demonstrators violated on occasion local ordinances which denied them their constitutional privileges, or deprived them of their right to public protest. In behalf of their legal rights as American citizens, they took what the local authorities declared to be "extra-legal" measures but which were frequently upheld by the higher federal courts. And they acted in behalf of the legal norms and moral values to which the nation as a whole had given its approval.

The situation of the Vietnam protest movement is somewhat different. Thus far, it has by and large been able to express its dissent openly and publicly, through the usual channels open to members of a democratic society—and this fact would seriously call into question any effort to employ civil disobedience as a political tactic by an organized movement. We question the rightness, for example, of recent efforts to stop troop trains in California: they involve an action by a small minority to revoke through its own decision the policy of a democratically elected government—which is something very different indeed from public protest against that government's decision or efforts to pressure it into changes of policy. Tactically, it might be added, such attempts at "symbolic" interference with the war effort are self-defeating, since they merely result in a display of impotence and alienate people who might be persuaded to join in political protest against the Johnson policy. A "revolutionary" tactic in a decidedly non-revolutionary situation is likely to do little more than increase the isolation of those who undertake it.

We believe that the present U.S. policy in Vietnam is morally and politically disastrous. We wish to see a movement of increasing scope appear in the United States which will press for a change in this policy. And we are convinced that toward this end it is necessary to employ every channel of democratic pressure and persuasion.

INDEX? — There will be a slight delay. Because of delays associated with starting bi-monthly publication, we are unable to print our two-year index in this issue. It will appear in our next issue. If possible, we will preprint it for mailing to libraries on request.

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Kenneth E. Boulding

3. What the First "Teach-In" Taught Us*

I participated in what may well turn out to have been an historic occasion, the first "teach-in" at the University of Michigan. This originated as a protest movement against the escalation of the war in Vietnam, by a group of Michigan faculty, mostly younger men. It developed from a simple protest into what turned out to be a unique educational experience, in which between two and three thousand students literally sat down and talked and argued all night. The movement spread rapidly to other campuses and organized a national teach-in which was held in Washington in May. It now begins to look like almost a national mobilization of university teachers and students. In a way, the forerunner of this movement was the remarkable mobilization of faculty members on university campuses against Goldwater, which represented political arousement on a scale which has rarely, if ever, been seen before in these supposedly cloistered circles. The teach-in movement is clearly a response to Johnson's behaving like Goldwater, so in a way is part of this same arousal.

Nobody, unfortunately, is much concerned to study the effects of all this, some of which may be quite different from what the people who are aroused by the arousal intend. I am constantly impressed by the ironies of social systems, where action often produces quite the reverse of the consequences which are intended. On the other hand, presumably, the better our knowledge of social systems, the more likely are we to avoid any unintentional consequences. It is important, therefore, for protesters to have some theory of protest, and to be sensitive to those circumstances in which protest is effective in achieving its intended consequences, and those circumstances in which it is not.

Let me venture, then, on a few tentative suggestions for a possible theory of protest, in the form of some tentative propositions.

1. Protest arises when there is strongly felt dissatisfaction with existing programs and policies of government or other organizations, on the part of those who feel themselves affected by these policies but who are unable to express their discontent through regular and legitimate channels, and who feel unable to exercise the weight to which they think they are entitled in the decisionmaking process. When nobody is listening to us and we feel we have something to say, then comes the urge to shout. The protester is the man in the advertisement who does not read the *Philadelphia Bulletin,* but who has something very important to say that clearly isn't in it. Furthermore, as he apparently has no access to the *Bulletin,* all he can do is to stand in the middle of its complacent readers and

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scream. In the present case, the State Department White Paper on Vietnam is clearly the *Philadelphia Bulletin;* the protesters are those who see something quite obvious that isn't in it.

2. Protest is most likely to be successful where it represents a view which is in fact widespread in the society, but which has somehow not been called to people's attention. The protest of the man who does not read the *Philadelphia Bulletin* is likely to be highly successful, as he is usually trying to call attention to events which obviously *ought* to be in the *Bulletin,* being intrinsically newsworthy. Societies, like solutions, get supersaturated or supercooled; that is, they reach a situation in which their present state is intrinsically unstable but it does not change because of the absence of some kind of nucleus around which change can grow. Under these circumstances, protest is like the seed crystal or the silver iodide in the cloud. It precipitates the whole system toward a position which it really ought to be in anyway. We see this exemplified in the relative success of the protest movements in civil rights. Here we have a situation, as Myrdal saw very clearly in *The American Dilemma,* in which certain fundamental images of the American society were inconsistent with its practices, and where, therefore, the protesters could appeal to an ideal which was very widely held. Wherever there is hypocrisy, there is strong hope of change, for the hypocrite is terribly vulnerable to protest. On the other hand, in the absence of protest, the supersaturated society may go on for a long time without change, simply because of what physicists call the nucleation problem.

3. Where the society is not supersaturated, a protest movement has a much rougher time. It then has to move the society toward the new position, from which change can then crystallize out, and this is a much more difficult task than crystallizing change in a society that is ready for it. Furthermore, protest as a social form, which may be very effective and indeed necessary in crystallizing a supersaturated society, may be quite ineffective in moving a society which is not saturated for change toward a point where it is saturated. That is, the techniques for creating the preconditions of change may be very different from the techniques required for crystallizing it. Where a society is divided and ambivalent, a protest movement designed to push it in one direction may easily arouse movements of counterprotest designed to resist the movement or to push it in the other direction. This is something to which protesters rarely give sufficient attention. Because they are themselves emotionally aroused, they tend to think that almost everybody must be in a similar frame of mind, which may not be true at all. It is quite possible, for instance, for protest movements to arouse counterprotests much larger than the original protests, and hence the net result of the protest is to move the system away from the direction in which the protesters want it to move. The Goldwater campaign was a good example of this. Goldwater was nominated as a Republican candidate as a result of a protest movement among discontented conservatives. The result, however, was the arousal of a much larger movement of counterprotest among those who were fright-

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ened and dismayed by Goldwater, which resulted in a quite unprecedented defeat.

4. The dynamic process of social systems are not entirely random, and this means that any particular social system is more likely to go in some directions than it is in others. Obviously, a protest movement which is trying to push the social system in a direction in which it has a high probability of going anyway is more likely to be successful than one that is trying to push the social system in a direction that has a low probability. Unfortunately, it is by no means easy to assess the various probabilities of change; nevertheless, we can surely know something about it. At least we can be pretty sure, for instance, that movements toward absolute hereditary monarchies today have a pretty slim chance of success. We can identify certain cumulative processes in the history of social systems, such as the growth of knowledge, the widening of integrative systems, and so on, which have a certain long-run irreversibility about them, even if they may have short-run setbacks. Systems move, however painfully, towards payoffs. As we learn to understand the payoffs, we can identify those protest movements which have the best chance of success. On the other hand, it is not the "real" payoffs which determine human behavior, but the imagined ones, and there can often be a strong divergence between the two, at least in the short run, and this short run can be painfully long.

5. We might perhaps distinguish between protest movements and educational movements, the one designed to crystallize a change for which a society is ready, the other to push the society toward a change for which it is not yet ready. The techniques of these two movements may be very different. A protest movement needs to be shrill, obstreperous, undignified, and careless of the pattern of existing legitimacy which it is seeking to destroy, in the interest of a new pattern which is waiting to emerge. Educational movements have to be low-keyed, respectful of existing legitimacies, and tying into them wherever possible, and chary of arousing counterprotest. A good example of this in race relations is the work of the NAACP, which unquestionably laid the educational groundwork for the recent protest movement in civil rights. When the movement for protest arrives, however, the educational institution is often pushed aside, and perhaps properly so, as inappropriate in the circumstances. On the other hand, protest movements for which society has not been prepared by education, or which are seeking for improbable change, are virtually doomed to failure, like the IWW. The movement for social security in this country is an interesting example of one in which the educational process dominates it almost completely, and where the role of protest is almost negligible.

6. Even when a situation is ripe for a protest movement, it can go astray and be ineffective if it takes an inappropriate form. The form of a protest should be closely related to the object of protest. This is why, for instance, on the whole, the sit-ins have been very successful, whereas marches and parades are usually less so. It can be particularly disastrous to the protest movement if the protest takes a form

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which arouses a counterprotest over the form itself, and not over the object of protest. Any object of protest can easily be lost in argument and counterargument over the question as to whether the form of the protest is legitimate or appropriate.

7. Protest movements are also likely to be weakened if the object of protest is not clear, or if there are many different objects, some of them incompatible, combined in the same protest. Thus the strike in industrial conflict is usually a rather effective form of protest, particularly when it is directed toward a change that would have come anyway, because it is appropriate to the objective, and the objective itself is usually very clear. Political protest, by contrast, is apt to be diffuse; its objectives are unclear and often inconsistent. Political protest movements almost always run into the problem of strange bedfellows, and the less clear the objectives of protest, the less likely is anybody to fulfill them.

With these propositions in mind, let us now take a look at the peace movement and the current movement of protest against the war in Vietnam. Unlike the civil rights movement, which had fulfilled almost all the conditions for successful protest, the peace movement only fulfills some of them. The condition which it fulfills is that related to the long-run payoff. There is no doubt that the payoffs of a stable peace are enormous. The $120 billion a year that the world spends on the war industry is an appalling waste which may well set back the achievement of world development by even hundreds of years, and might even prevent it altogether. The probability of long-run change toward a system of stable peace is therefore high, and the peace movement fulfills this one essential requirement for the success of a movement for social change. On the other hand, it fulfills practically none of the other conditions. Its objectives in terms of specific institutional and behavorial change are not clear. We still do not really know how to get stable peace, and what particular forms of behavior lead us toward rather than away from this goal. There is, furthermore, a great diversity of view as to immediate objectives within the peace movement.

It is clear also that American society at least is not supersaturated in regard to social change toward stable peace. In a sense, the task of the peace movement is fundamentally educational, rather than protest. Most of the communications which are received by Americans, whether in the formal educational system or in the informal contacts of face to face conversation, tend to create an image of the world in which war is a recurrent necessity, and in which, furthermore, for the United States, war has paid off pretty well. We tend to associate war with easy victories, like the war against Mexico or Spain, or with periods of economic prosperity and recovery from depression, as in the Second World War. We are not and never have been a peace-loving nation; we are not only ruthless and bloody but we feel no shame about it. There is nothing in our Constitution; in our national heroes, many of whom are generals; in our national origin, which came out of a war; in our greatest single national experience, which was the Civil War; or in anything which con-

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tributes to our national image which makes war illegitimate in the way racial discrimination is felt to be illegitimate and inconsistent with our national ideals. In the case of war we have very little hypocrisy, and change is very difficult. The peace movement is not simply trying to mobilize an already existing mass feeling or sentiment; it is trying to create a radical change in the national image, against which all the forces of ordinary legitimacy seem to be arrayed. In the case of the peace movement, therefore, protest arouses counterprotest with great ease. The hawks in our society far outnumber the doves, and those who flutter the dovecotes stand in danger of arousing clouds of hawks from their innumerable nests. It will take an extensive process of education and perhaps even the grim teacher of national disaster before we learn that the prevailing national image is incompatible with our well-being or even with our survival, and we have yet to learn that we are only one people among many, that we are not the rulers of the world, that power cannot be exercised without legitimacy, and that the costs of stable peace, significant and important as they are, are far less than the benefits.

The teach-in movement represents perhaps a partly subconscious recognition of the validity of some of the above principles. It began as a movement of pure protest and outrage. The motivations which inspired it were no doubt various. They included a genuine fear of escalation into nuclear warfare; they included also a sense of moral outrage at the use of such things as napalm and the "lazy dog," and the appalling sufferings which we are imposing on the Vietnamese in the supposed name of freedom and democracy. Coupled with this, unquestionably, were some people on the left who were politically sympathetic with the objectives of the Vietcong, though in the original movement there were few if any of these. I am inclined to think that the largest motivating factor was a sense of simple human sympathy with the sufferings of the Vietnamese, and a sense of outrage at the utterly inhuman weapons of the American air force, and a sense of outrage also that we were using Vietnamese as the guinea pigs in weapon experimentation. The method of protest first suggested by the original group at University of Michigan was a work moratorium and a one-day suspension of classes. This violated a good many of the above principles. It is a form of protest which is not related to the object of protest; it immediately aroused a large counterprotest over the means, as well as over the object of protest, and it was very strongly on the protest side of the spectrum and away from education. The teach-in, which was adopted as a substitute, was much more successful. It at least edged toward the education end of the spectrum, even though it still retained a good many of the qualities of protest, and it was appropriate to the situation. The teach-in movement, furthermore, seems to be developing more and more in the direction of dialogue rather than pure protest, and this itself reflects the fact that there is an educational task ahead rather than a task of pure protest. The basic problem here is change in the national image itself, and this is something which protest is singularly unable to

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do, for protest has to take the image for granted and call attention to certain inconsistencies and incompatibilities. It assumes a given national image and says, in effect, to the policymaker, "be consistent with it."

Under these circumstances, what is likely to be the best strategy for those of us who are interested in producing social change toward stable peace? The answer seems fairly clear. It should be a strategy of limited protest and extensive education. We should not, I think, abandon protest altogether, for there are many points even now at which, for instance, the conduct of the war in Vietnam violates a widespread national image of the United States as a reasonably decent and compassionate country. Protest, I suspect, should be directed mainly at the air force; it should be directed at the use of specific weapons which certainly fall under the heading of "cruel and unusual punishments," the moral feeling against which is securely enshrined in our Constitution and history. We have paid enough lip service to the United Nations also, to render protests on this score viable. The contrast between the shred of legitimacy which the United Nations gave us in Korea and the total absence of legitimacy in Vietnam is very striking, and protest could well be concentrated on this. We also have in our national image a high value on negotiation and a willingness to negotiate, and our present interpretation of negotiation as the abject surrender of the other side can be protested fiercely and effectively. Beyond this, I suspect, protest will be ineffective, with one possible exception. Our deepest trouble in Vietnam arises out of the total failure of our China policy, and at this point it may well be that the country is ripe for change, and that, to continue this particular metaphor, protest will shake the tree. There is real danger lest in our obsession with Vietnam we forget the larger issue and we forget that the solution to Vietnam lies in our relationship with Peking.

Beyond this, social change toward stable peace can only come through education and research. The educational task is to convince people that stable peace is possible. Here we need to point to the many examples in which it has already been achieved. In the educational process, unlike in the process of protest, we want to tie in as far as possible with existing legitimacy, existing images, and familiar history. We need to play up how we got a security community with the British and the Canadians. We need to play up historical examples of peaceful coexistence, such as was achieved between Protestants and Catholics in the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. We need to emphasize the continuing dynamic that goes on in socialist countries as well as in our own, and to emphasize the learning process and our role as a teacher. We need to emphasize also the possible role of the United States not as a great power or as a world dominator, but as a leader in a world movement for stable peace. All these things can easily be fitted into existing images and existing legitimacies. Then at some point, a protest movement may be necessary to crystallize the image as a peace leader. This may be some time off, but we should be ready for it when it comes.

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Michael Walzer

4. Democracy and the Conscript

The use of draftees to fight "little wars"—colonial repressions, police actions, counter-insurgency operations—is relatively new. Before World War II, these sorts of wars were fought by volunteer or mercenary armies, often recruited from foreign or colonial populations. The French Foreign Legion and the British Gurkha regiments are the most obvious examples. Even after World War II, the Foreign Legion bore the brunt of the fighting in Indo-China and the Gurkhas in Malaya. But increasingly the Western democracies have found it necessary, or thought it necessary, to use drafted troops, if only in supportive roles—the English first in Malaya and later in Cyprus, the French in Algeria, the U.S. in Korea and Vietnam. This necessity is not only a matter of manpower, though the use of national troops clearly had to be stepped up as the colonies won independence and enlisted or drafted their own citizens for their own armies. But draftees have another purpose: they have become a crucial token of national commitment and determination. Thus, Mendes-France threatened to send conscripts to Indo-China if no satisfactory solution were reached at Geneva in 1954, and probably won better terms as a result. And the American decision to use conscripts in Vietnam was a major escalation of the war, far greater than mere numbers would suggest, because it made it possible to envisage a longer and bigger struggle than even the French had fought.

Whatever its practical rationale, the use of conscripts in wars like the one in Vietnam poses two difficult questions for the citizens of a democracy and especially for those who oppose the wars. The first question must be answered by all the citizens together: is it just to require men to fight if neither their homeland nor the security of their nation is in actual danger? The second question must be answered by some of the citizens, alone: ought I to fight in a war I believe to be unjust?

Before the first of these questions can be dealt with, there is an important preliminary consideration. Drafted troops can only be used in an undeclared war (there have been no declared wars since World War II) if there is a peacetime draft, and a peacetime draft is probably not politically viable unless large numbers of young men, chiefly from the middle and upper classes, are exempted from its compulsions. Their careers, indeed, their persons, must be declared more valuable to the nation than are those of the men who are to be drafted.

All of us who have benefited from such exemptions are grateful for them, even though we know, or ought to know, how nugatory our "value" is. But it is not for us to talk of the

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obligations of the others. There is, in fact, no plausible argument in democratic theory for obligations which are not, in some sense, universal. Yet selective conscription has become an essential characteristic of the politics of modern warfare. In his book on the Algerian War, Joseph Kraft describes the conscripts sent to Algeria after March, 1956: "The new recruits represented a fair sampling of civilian France: fishermen from Brittany, metal workers from the Paris suburbs, dockers from Marseilles, peasants from the Jura, furniture workers from the Nord."

American troops in Korea probably represented a sampling less "fair" than this. A study of Korean war dead done in the mid-fifties by two Wayne University sociologists suggests that the Negro and poor populations of the U.S. suffered an extraordinarily disproportionate number of the losses. These are our domestic Gurkhas; selective conscription apparently involves a kind of colonial recruitment at home. Many of the poor, of course, enlist, either because they know they will be drafted if they don't or because they think of the army as an escape from the intolerable conditions in which they live (which it is); but such enlistments are hardly free choices.

II

Waging little wars with an army staffed largely from the lower classes has one very important, in fact, politically crucial advantage for those who begin and lead the wars: domestic repercussions are delayed and muffled. A genuinely universal draft would almost certainly be a major restraint upon peacetime warmaking, if only because it would mean that the sons of politically articulate and effective classes would die in greater numbers, though for no more significant purposes. This is the political value (there is a moral value as well) of the democratic principle of "equal sacrifice." Similarly, a successful civil rights movement or a successful war on poverty would be a restraint, since it would give a voice to those whose sons are already dying and at the same time cut down the enlistment rates.

The draft itself probably sets some limits to peacetime military activity, limits less and less effective, however, insofar as American civilians accept the ideology of the cold war and come to disbelieve in the political and moral reality of peace. For the idea of peace is vital to the democratic theory of war: the best political arguments for universal military service and democratic warfare all involve the limits and restraints which an army of civilians, of peaceful men, impose upon professional soldiers. These arguments have not figured much in recent American discussions about the draft, but they seem to me of enormous weight. First of all, a civilian army is a guarantee of civilian control, a defense against military adventurism. This is true even in an age of close cooperation between civilian and military bureaucrats, precisely because distant and "dirty" wars strain the bureaucratic alliance. The defiance of governmental authority by embittered professionals is a far greater danger today than in a time of total war when the professionals can claim and are likely to receive total governmental support. And so the presence in the army of men in close touch

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with the home country, both mentally and socially, becomes a significant counterforce to militarist ambition. The loyalty of conscript soldiers to the Parisian government, for example, was an important factor in the failure of the Algerian army revolts of 1960 and 1961.

Secondly, the political repercussions of fighting an often bloody if "little" war are likely to be felt more quickly if the war is fought with civilian soldiers than if it is fought with professionals, and more quickly still, as has already been suggested, if it is fought with men of all classes than if with men of the lower classes. The commitment of conscripts may well be a sign of national determination, but it is also an invitation to domestic protest. This works two ways, of course, for it may be equally easy for opposition politicians to demand a quick victory (at whatever cost to the enemy) or a negotiated peace. There are a number of Republican politicians today who believe the first of these possibilities to be more popular than the second and are therefore willing to accept the risks of rapid escalation in Vietnam. They believe that Americans would feel more comfortable with a fuller commitment and so they serve to illustrate a point often made by theorists hostile to democracy: that democratic governments cannot sustain those military restraints which are so vital if little wars are to remain little. Nevertheless, recent experience both in this country and in France suggests that the greatest pressure for escalation comes not from frustrated or despairing civilians or from their political representatives, but from professional officers. The most popular politicians of the post-World War II period have been the peace-makers; and if these have often been generals—Eisenhower, DeGaulle—they have had massive civilian support against other generals. Probably this support is enhanced by the presence of civilians in the army: they and their relatives form a powerful pressure group with a real interest in opposing escalation.

Thirdly, it is probably true that the presence of civilian soldiers is at least a moderate inhibition on war-time brutality. Considerable time is spent in training camps breaking down civilian moral standards, but this effort is, in general, very far from successful, especially among draftees who continue to regard themselves as civilians and the army only as an interruption of a civilian career. (Here is another reason why the recruitment of the poor increases the power of professional soldiers: the poor have no very interesting civilian careers to look forward to.) Conscripts remain, however rigorous their training, less reliable than professional soldiers when it comes to the dirty business of war. In Algeria it was the elite "paras" who used torture against FLN supporters; conscripts were generally shielded from this particular sort of barbarism, in part, perhaps, because they would have been revolted by it; in part because they would have talked about it. The maintenance of secrecy is certainly one of the advantages of a professional army, but since secrets are kept not only from the enemy but also from the civilian population, and since these concern not only military affairs but also what may be called the politics of warfare, this is

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not necessarily a recommendation.

Finally, a conscript army is similarly unreliable when it is used for purely political purposes, for the suppression of civilian populations, either at home or abroad. At any rate, this has been the hope of democratic theorists, and there are professional soldiers—for example, the political colonels of the French army—who would strongly agree. Perhaps this is what President Kennedy had in mind when he said that it was especially difficult for democracies to fight little wars against local insurgents—for these are inevitably also wars against civilian populations. It is not clear that Kennedy's statement is true; one would like to think that it is. How would American troops, for example, have responded to an order to wipe out rebel forces in Santo Domingo? At any rate, they would presumably not have been so brutally efficient as were the paratroopers who fought the "battle of Algiers" in the late 1950's.

All these are arguments, certainly not in any way conclusive, but to my mind very persuasive, against professional armies made up of men largely or entirely cut off from civilian life. Such armies are the only practical alternative to the draft—though opponents of the draft do not readily admit this—and there is no reason to think that a country as rich as the U.S., with as many wars to fight, with as many poor people to fight them, could not successfully recruit professional soldiers, offering very high pay and other prerogatives and cultivating a kind of military elitism. Even today the advantages of a military career (free medical care, retirement after twenty years, etc.) are quite extraordinary, better than anything available at similar levels in civilian life. But the whole thrust of democratic thought is against professionalism; its central goal is to require genuine popular support before a war can be carried on, to deny the army any sort of independence from the nation and the people.

Today, little wars seem increasingly to be fought without regard to the procedures of democratic government (opinion polling is no substitute for public debate and legislative choice): all the more important, then, that they may be fought with democratic armies. Often entered into gradually, as a result of secret executive decisions, such wars might never arouse strong popular feelings were it not for the draft. The presence of drafted troops provides at least a minimum guarantee that little wars will not be accepted casually or passively at home. The people hope at first for some quick result, but then wait with greater and greater apprehension for the casualty lists. When the war is deadlocked—and deadlock is a frequent outcome of wars fought under extreme political and military restraints—a democratic army becomes a permanent referendum, in which dead men vote for peace.

III

Political arguments for a democratic army do not, however, go very far toward establishing a moral obligation to serve nor a moral right to oblige others to serve. A very strong case can be made that such rights and obligations arise only in wars which can plausibly be described as defensive, wars in which *la patrie* is in

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actual danger—a description obviously implausible with regard to most of the little wars recently fought by the Western democracies. There are, in fact, historical precedents for the theory that conscription ought to be for defense only—and even that in a very limited sense. In World War II, for example, the Canadian government drafted men for home service and sent only volunteers overseas. Given the character of modern warfare, that distinction probably makes little sense (it had a great deal to do with Canadian domestic politics); nevertheless the example does serve to point up the difficulty of obliging men to fight in distant wars where even defeat entails no danger to their homeland.

Why not insist that such wars be fought only by volunteers, who presumably believe in them? The political reasons against this seem to me very strong, but they make moral sense only if some way out is provided for men who actively object to a particular war. A doctrine of conscientious *acceptance* is untenable: little wars would then be fought largely by psychopaths, mercenaries and true believers. A doctrine of conscientious *objection,* however, is perfectly justifiable. Coupled with a truly universal draft, it would go some way toward establishing a greater degree of popular control over modern war-making. Above all, it would open new possibilities for the effective registration of political discontent.

In recent discussions, the right to refuse to participate in a particular war has been confused with the right to refuse the draft altogether. In a democracy, the latter right simply does not exist—though special provisions may and certainly ought to be made for citizens who conscientiously assert the wickedness of all wars. Men who object not to war in general but to a particular war face an intolerable dilemma. If they enter the army, they are under military discipline and likely to pay a very high price if they subsequently refuse, say, to pack off to the Dominican Republic. If, on the other hand, they refuse to enter the army, they are not merely declining to go to the Dominican Republic, they are refusing also to participate along with their fellow citizens in conventional deterrence and defense. And the latter sort of activity, as I've said, can plausibly be called an obligation. The only possible solution to this dilemma is to insist that the right of conscientious objection belongs to soldiers as well as to civilians: it is not a right which can only be exercised at a single moment in time or on the single ground of pacifism (which is not to say that it can be exercised at any moment or on any ground).

There ought to be legal procedures by which an individual soldier can "object" to a particular war which he believes to be unjust, just as there are at present procedures, more theoretical than actual, by which he can object to a particular command which he believes to be illegal. This does not mean that a democratic decision must be made before a regiment of troops consents to go to Vietnam; such decisions are not even made in Congress with regard to the army as a whole. The individual right to opt out, to wait for some other assignment, is something quite different. Its

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essential purpose is the defense of conscience. It will only interfere with military discipline when a particular war is highly unpopular, and then, one would think, interference is desirable.

"A conscripted private on a firing squad," Justice Robert Jackson told the Nuremberg Tribunal, "cannot expect to hold an inquest on the validity of the execution." I suppose he cannot; once he has agreed to serve on the firing squad, he must shoot whoever the military courts require to be shot. But he ought to be able, at some prior point, to refuse to serve on a firing squad. The same principle applies also to the fighting of little wars, that is, there are moments when objection is possible and there are moments when one must obey. Such things would have to be worked out legally, and I make no pretense of knowing just how that might be done. It seems clear, however, that at those moments when individual objection is possible, it is also sufficient. No subsequent adjudication is necessary, for no court can rule on the validity of this or that conscientious objection and all objections must be assumed to be conscientious (so long as certain formal criteria are met or certain formal procedures gone through). One of the difficulties with arguments based on the Nuremberg trials and the legal right not to commit "war crimes," is that these do involve judicial decisions with regard to the substance of objections. I do not see how such decisions can ever be binding on conscience.

It is obvious that the right of conscientious objection to a particular war ought to be recognized even if the war has the overwhelming and enthusiastic support of a vast majority of the people. Like all other human rights, it must be protected against popular tyranny, though majorities are free to attach whatever stigmas they choose to its exercise. But like other human rights again, it must be protected chiefly against the state and the various agents who act in the name of the state. And in time of war, even of little war, judges function largely as state agents. Modern war-making is no more subject to independent legal control than it is to any significant degree of democratic political control. It is for this reason above all that conscientious objection has become an important issue in American life.

IV

The whole of the previous argument rests upon the pessimistic assumption that the U.S. is going to continue to fight little wars. America has become, as the English journalist Henry Fairlie argued some months ago in the *Sunday Times Magazine,* an "imperial" power, and the maintenance of our hegemony is likely to require a considerable amount of fighting in the next several decades (at the perimeters of the empire, as Fairlie said), most of it on a relatively small scale, much of it against civilians, some of it costly and brutal. I don't think that all this fighting will necessarily be unjust; I am certain that it will often be morally objectionable to a great many Americans and especially to American radicals. Yet no popular movement seems likely to

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arise in the U.S. in the foreseeable future advocating the surrender of our hegemony or the creation of a new international order. We can hope at best for a kind of democratic "backlash" against a particular war. Such a reaction is more likely the more fully the impact of such wars is brought home at every turn to the American people. To that end we ought to urge a democratic draft and oppose every form of selective conscription and every grant of power and prerogatives to professional soldiers. And at the same time we ought to defend the right of individual refusal, both as a way of making civilian opposition felt within the army itself, and as a protection for conscience if that opposition fails.

Tom Kahn

5. Direct Action and Democratic Values

The following article is adapted from a speech delivered at a conference of "Turn Toward Peace."

I will be talking about direct action as a nonparliamentary, nonelectoral form of struggle for social change—that is, as a political act. I mean deliberately to exclude, at the outset, the purely conscientious form of direct action—that is, acts of protest conducted by individuals as a matter of private conscience or morality, regardless of their political impact. About this form of direct action, there is much to respect but little to say. If an individual refuses as a matter of conscience (be it religious or political conscience) to serve in the armed forces or to pay his income tax, that is one thing. If he urges these policies on others, advocating them as a strategy for social change, then he has stepped into the political realm, and consequently he invites political judgments.

If we accept the definition of direct action as nonparliamentary, nonelectoral forms of struggle for social change, then it is clear that practically nobody of consequence opposes direct action. The unions engage in it through strikes and picket lines. Rent strikes have—more or less—been legalized in New York State. The Supreme Court has upheld the constitutional right of citizens to sit-in, and even President Johnson has acknowledged that it took street demonstrations to get civil rights legislation through Congress.

To be sure, there are other forms of direct action or social dislocation which are not officially sanctioned. My point is that among intelligent people the issue is not: for or against

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direct action per se. Rather, the issue is: what kind of direct action, at what time, and for what purpose.

As a democratic socialist, I do not necessarily confine myself to those forms of direct action which have been *legalized* by the society. But I do feel the obligation to determine what forms of direct action are *legitimate* in terms of democratic theory. Often, though not always, this question will bear on the tactical efficacy of direct action.

This is a complex subject, about which it is difficult to formulate hard-and-fast rules. In concrete struggles there are always exceptional situations, unprecedented circumstances. If the following observations seem tendentious or dogmatic, they are intended as notes, not as last words. Hopefully, they will provoke counterarguments as well as refinements.

I

In the radical movement, direct action (mass action, social dislocation) has been developed in two forms. First, *as a substitute for parliamentary action.* The only embodiment of this form in the United States was the IWW. In general, this approach has been confined to the Syndicalist movement, reaching its peak in the myth of the general strike: halt production, and power will fall from the bourgeoisie into your own hands. (One difficulty here was that the anarchists themselves were unwilling to accept that power).

Hand-in-hand with this view of direct action goes what I would call "The Theory of Permanent Demonstration." That is, it becomes necessary to have demonstration after demonstration, to keep the masses perpetually in motion in the streets. For there is no other way to keep alive what is deemed to be the only legitimate form of power. The problem, of course, is that the masses, like everyone else, tire of the streets; they cannot be kept constantly in turmoil—especially if the demonstrations fail to produce concrete gains. In actuality, "direct action" for the IWW turned out to be mainly a series of general strikes, mostly in small Western towns. They chained themselves to lamp-posts, filled the jails, and were masters at social dislocation. But in the overwhelming majority of these efforts there were no sequels, and no permanent or durable organization was left behind.

Among virtually all other sections of the radical movement, this conception of direct action was rejected in favor of another: namely, that direct action *was a supplement to parliamentary action.* In fact, when direct action was most successful, its purpose was to achieve parliamentary—that is, legislative—successes. More specifically, direct action as a mass movement—not merely as scattered protest—was most impressive and successful in the struggle for universal suffrage.

It is interesting to note that right-wing and left-wing socialists alike rejected the anarchist concept of direct action. They saw it, instead, as a weapon to which the masses were compelled to resort because they were otherwise cut off from democratic expression. In Germany, for example, Rosa Luxemburg called for mass action precisely because the workers

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were denied equal suffrage. Only through mass action could that right be extracted from the ruling classes. Here, too, it should be noted that the advocacy of mass action by left-wing socialists was directed at large-scale workers movements or social democratic parties. It was not undertaken as a substitute for, or in the absence of, a major political movement. Rather, it was part of a strategy to move social forces in certain directions, to secure massive support. This was a criterion by which direct action was to be judged.

Here I am reminded of Leon Trotsky's remark about the tactics of the German Communists in the immediate pre-Hitler period—namely, that they "succeeded only in irritating all classes instead of winning any." They irritated the bourgeoisie by continued sniping, not followed up by energetic moves toward power. They irritated the confused middle-classes because, while the Communists could not or would not themselves rule, they wouldn't let anyone else. Finally, they wore out the patience of the workers through continual demonstrations and street fighting. Inevitably, there comes along a force calling for the restoration of order—and all classes unite (actively or passively) in putting down the disorderly.

I have referred often to the radical and socialist movements of the past because the "new left" today, after all, regards itself not as liberal but as radical and at least socialistic. The historical experience, as I understand it, can be summarized in this way: with regard to revolutionary overthrow, socialists believed that in a tyrannical regime, direct action or social dislocation was the only course. Even in a parliamentary regime, they considered it necessary in the struggle for legislative success. But it was not made a fetish. It was not viewed as suitable for everything by everybody at every time. Each contemplated action was to be judged on its own practical, strategic merit. What is the goal to be achieved? Will the given action bring us closer to that goal or divert us from it? Whom will it alienate, whom will it win over? Are we engaging in an act which endangers not only our individual safety, but the prospects of the movement?

II

Several analogies suggest themselves with regard to the civil rights movement in this country. First of all, it is clear that the direct action phase of the movement, launched in the South, began at a time when official national policy had shifted from acquiescence in segregation to the view that it was wrong in principle. (There is not space to describe the nature of the struggle that went into causing the shift, except to say that it was not primarily based on direct action). Opposition to segregation may have been passive, enforcement of integration certainly was. Nonetheless, if at the time of the 1960 sit-ins, the majority of Southerners were still segregationists, the majority of the country was not.

Now it can be argued that the sit-ins would have been morally defensible and deserving of support no matter when they had occurred—if, say, they had occurred twenty years

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earlier. Abstractly speaking, of course, any protest against injustice is always morally supportable. On the other hand, it is quite possible that, had the sit-ins been launched earlier, they might have provoked the reactionary forces into brutal suppression, without arousing significant support. (Indeed, this was the fate of earlier direct action attempts.) As it turned out, the sit-ins helped to create a massive civil rights movement and to split the white power structure.

As it also turns out, most of the demands raised by the sit-in movement —mainly in the field of public accommodation—have been legislated into law. But in almost any area of life, direct action in the South has had a legitimacy precisely because of the absence of universal suffrage—that is, the disfranchisement of the Negro population. This fact alone, where it obtains, negates the claim to political democracy and bars the redress of grievances through representative political structures. Even though the electorate may constitute a majority of the total population, denial of equal rights to the minority is inherently undemocratic and therefore invalidates the minority's obligation not to obstruct the implementation of the majority's policies. This, it seems to me, is the justification for those forms of direct action which are coercive, though nonviolent, in effect (e.g., sitting-in at a lunch counter, which imposes on the owner the choice of integrating or closing down, foreclosing his preference for the status quo).

I am not arguing that direct action has no place in a society where the right to vote is guaranteed. I am arguing for a correct understanding of the relationships of direct action to political power. Bayard Rustin has oftent stated that direct action may call attention to an injustice but only in certain instances can simultaneously eliminate it. If direct action calls attention to the injustice, it is symbolic; if it simultaneously eliminates the injustice, it is likely to be coercive or obstructive. The distinction depends not on the form of the direct action but on its function in a given situation. (For example, the sit-in a few years ago on the Triboro Bridge was obstructive of traffic but not of the New York segregation it was meant to protest. It was therefore symbolic—and not very symbolic since it was so far removed from the injustice.) The prominence achieved by coercive direct action, because of its dramatic successes in the South, may have obscured Rustin's point that it is applicable only in limited situations. Symbolic direct action has wider possibilities in support of social change. *But real change occurs when the dominant social organism acknowledges the demanded right and incorporates it into some effective legal instrument.*

A brilliant illustration of this process—and a monumentally successful direct action—was the Selma march. The moral effect of the march was enormous, but the real change occurred at the point when Congress passed the Voting Rights Act. The change will continue as the Act is tested in the enforcement. Again, the point is that direct action is effective to the extent that it secures a general political recognition, the latter being embodied or nailed down in society by legal in-

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struments with superior power behind them.

From this it follows that politically successful direct action is not simply a form of self-expression but must be aimed at arousing and winning specific support from specific groups. For without a substantial political movement behind it, it cannot hope to effect change at the point where it must occur in public policy.

III

It must simply be presumed that the goal of direct action is to change public policy. Individuals participating in that action may derive important existential benefits: meaning may be added to thir lives and outlets for creative impulses may open. These benefits cannot be dismissed; they are central to the radical philosophical tradition which values engagement and struggle.

But the existential or personal meaning presupposes the objective reality of the struggle. Unlike great theater, arenas of struggle cannot be reproduced at will to provide a framework of emotional involvement. The reality of social conflict is a matter of tangible victories and defeats, of ground won and lost, of institutional changes which become the starting point of the succeeding generation. The sense of individual purpose comes from engagement with others in the external challenge to maximize the potentialities for human change within our given time.

It is a common external goal, whatever inner meanings this goal may have for the individual, that brings people together into a movement and defines their responsibilities to each other. If I join a group in a lunch counter sit-in, I may experience a religious exaltation, the next man may be paralyzed with fear, the next may be seething with violence. In another context, I might be interested in encouraging the fullest airing of all these feelings. But at that point, our common concern is to integrate the lunch counter, and each of us relies heavily on that assumption—on that common external goal. That is the mandate, the responsibility, each of us accepts. We may take on others, voluntarily—but then we enter into different relationships, to which we ought not be involuntarily committed in advance.

Perhaps the point is belabored, but not irrelevantly. There is a tendency among some "movement" people to defend forms of direct action that clearly misfire or damage the cause on the grounds that these nonetheless serve a higher morality, that of spontaneous human expression. Whether such expression does represent a higher morality than the cause is an interesting question. But support for the cause is the basis of the *human* movement and the associations it fosters. While ultimate problems of morality are being pondered, one is obliged to act morally, that is with a sense of responsibility, toward the movement itself. Questions of morality and democratic ethics become closely interwined. Does one, for example, have the "right" to engage in an act which evokes hostility to the civil rights movement—or which discredits the peace movement? In the process of self-expression, to what extent do we take the destinies of others into our own hands?

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IV

Direct action of the self-expressive kind aims for visibility, not power. This is not to stay that it solves the problem of power; on the contrary, it does not confront it. It opposes power, but does not grapple with it. Opposition, therefore, becomes individual. An example of this process is the current anti-draft campaign, the proponents of which admittedly do not expect to build a movement that can change American policies in Vietnam. Even the most sympathetic observers must recognize that because of the necessarily limited scope of the campaign, the most militant forms of direct action (e.g., draft-card burnings) can raise demands no more radical than that draftees be permitted alternate service in Vista, the Peace Corps, etc. The latter are hardly major areas of social conflict where issues of power are involved.

That, objectively, no other options were open to youth who opposed the war may or may not be true. It is in any case irrelevant to the main point, which is not what strategy the student movement should pursue with regard to the war, but the relationship between direct action and democratic social change. The opportunities for the desired relationship may not always be present; it is still important to know what relationship is desired.

It is important, and pertinent to democracy, to evaluate whether given forms of direct action lead to the building or strengthening of institutions which are capable of representing and struggling for the interests of aggrieved classes—not just in dramatic spasms but with unrelenting tenacity. Such institutions—one thinks immediately, though not exclusively, of the labor movement—fill the void between the individual and the state, between protest and mechanical politics. These are the mass organizations which a totalitarian state invariably destroys or takes over in its consolidation of power. In criticizing these institutions for their bureaucratic deformities and lack of militancy, we can easily forget that their very existence, independently of the state, is crucial to democracy. And it is the relationship between these institutions and the state at any given time that defines the potential for change—reformist or revolutionary, peaceful or violent, democratic or elitist.

V

Direct action which is not related to a strategy for building a mass movement has within it a tendency toward elitism. Direct action which alienates potential allies, which aims to differentiate itself rather than to attract others, soon succeeds in isolating itself. It is then prone to accept the notion that given the relative passivity or indifference or cowardice of the liberal or reform movements, it must act in place of them.

Something of this notion has already appeared on the scene. It was represented, I think, by the Assembly of Unrepresented People, and by the recent slogans on behalf of "parallel government" and "counter-institutions." I understand it has been suggested that a counter-government be established to negotiate peace with the Vietcong. Others, not waiting for such a government to be born, have already declared peace.

Staughton Lynd, in his *Liberation*

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article ("Nonviolent Revolution or Coalition Politics," June-July issue) helped crystallize the subtle putschism that characterizes this mood (fortunately, it is not yet an ideology.) Musing over the April 17th March on Washington, Lynd suggests that the next time the marchers should take over "their government," if "only for a few minutes." As Bayard Rustin properly replied (*Partisan Review*, Fall 1965): "Under whose mandate are the 20,000 Washington marchers entitled to occupy 'their government' for even ten minutes? Does Lynd believe that they represented the views of anything approaching a majority of the American people on the question of Vietnam? On the contrary, the public opinion polls all revealed substantial majorities in support of Administration policies. What gives the disaffected sons and daughters of the middle class the right even symbolically to become the government?"

I doubt that Straughton Lynd or his followers constitue a clear and present danger to the U.S. government, but his ideas may count for something in the "new left," particularly among the counter-institutionalists. They surely have implications for the relationship of direct action to democracy, and not merely bourgeois formalist democracy, either. Granted that in a revolutionary situation, it may be difficult to take a head-count to see whether you have majority support for a seizure of power; nonetheless, democrats in such a situation would be concerned with whether they had the visible support of majoritarian institutions and organized groups in the society. They would have a healthy respect for the democratic mass movements of people, even when they felt those movements were short-sighted, or vacillating, or bureaucratized.

Even to discuss these matters is embarrassing, because they are so irrelevant to the struggles around us. But if revolutionary symbolism is to be the aura of direct action, then at least the democratic vision should be kept clear. Otherwise, what happens if power is hitched to the symbols?

Another question in the same vein was raised by the Berkeley students who blocked trains carrying troops. Certainly no one can question anybody's right to demonstrate at train stations or to protest troop movements. Rallies, banners, speakers—all are legitimate. What is questionable is the right of a minority physically to prevent the implementation of national policy.

The fact it that it is a matter of national policy to prosecute the war in Vietnam. The public opinion polls —and I grant they are faulty—indicate a large majority support for months. One may oppose that policy and the majority supporting it. One may—and I think must—work in many ways (including direct action) to change that policy and to win over a majority of the people. But what one may not do is, in effect, declare his views to be the majority view, and begin to implement his own policies.

There is an exception to this principle. If democracy means majority rule, it also means that the majority is under an obligation to protect the rights of the minority. If, in carrying out its decisions, democratically arrived at, the majority tramples on my *equal* rights, I am justified in obstructing those decisions. The right of

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Southern Negroes to obstruct the functioning of public accommodations and other institutions is clear because the effect of the majority segregationist policy was to deny them rights which everyone else had.

It does not seem to me that the Berkeley students could draw on the sit-ins for justification. Their right to protest against American policy has not been trampled upon (though exercising it may be unpopular). The decision to pursue the war has been made by a democratically-elected government and endorsed by a democratically-elected Congress. That decision, though it may be politically wrong and offensive, does not deny equal rights.* Under such circumstances, how can a minority, in effect, impose its will on the majority?

Perhaps the point becomes clearer if the historical setting is changed. Let us assume that the man in the White House is Franklin D. Roosevelt and, with the approval of Congress, he has decided to send troops and supplies to support the Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War. Right wing groups lie down in front of the troop trains. . . . Or, the U.S. decides to sell large quantities of wheat to the Soviet Union, and dockworkers refuse to load the ships. . . .

The counter arguments are well known and not without weight: the decision to pursue the war in Vietnam was not democratically arrived at; the power structure controls the mass media; facts about the war have been concealed, public opinion has been manipulated; the democratic elections are therefore shams; etc.

To deny all of this is to deny that we live in a class society wherein wealth and power are concentrated, and political democracy is qualified by economic oligarchy. On the other hand, to deny my arguments is to deny that there is a difference between bourgeois democracy and totalitarianism. (Indeed, the difference often is denied by some spokesman of the "new left.")

It is also to deny, despite all of the perversions of political democracy one may cite, that there has been more public debate about, and vocal opposition to, the Vietnam War than to any war in a century. The minority has demonstrated in cities throughout the country, has confronted Administration spokesmen in scores of teach-ins at major universities, has received widespread publicity (much of it distorted, but much of it not) in the mass media, has organized two mass marches on Washington— in short, has openly and vigorously opposed official national policy to a degree inconceivable in a totalitarian society. The democratic freedoms which some are prone to dismiss so lightly as "formalistic" have been precisely the indispensable prerequisites for minority protest.

The need to put content into formal freedoms, as the "participatory democrats" recently (and democratic socialists all along) have urged, is no less

* This must be qualified: the draft does discriminate against working class and poor youths who, lacking money for college, cannot get student deferments. I know of no efforts to organize such youths to campaign for abolition of the 2-S status. The precedent might be the campaign of Negroes to integrate the armed forces. Even Negro pacifists participated on the grounds that so long as armies existed, they should be run without discrimination.

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urgent. But "participatory democracy" —with its striving toward consensus and lowest-common-denominator politics, and with its tendency to mute opposition and channel hostilities—is no substitute for the formal guarantees of the right to vote, to dissent, to organize an opposition, to seek leadership and to denounce leaders (which assumes you can identify them). We do not expand and deepen these rights by refusing to recognize them when they exist—or by devaluating them when, because they are breached and undermined by their fair-weather friends, we are compelled to take to the streets.

Emanuel Geltman

6. Vietnam Protest and the Unions

Among participants in the recent demonstrations for peace, especially the younger activists, dismay over the position of the unions on the Vietnam war has a way, at times, of spilling over into impatience, even hostility, toward the whole idea of unionism. I share their unhappiness at the way the trade unions have fallen into line behind Johnson's foreign policy; I agree that there is a real and very difficult problem here for those of us who want to create a widely-based protest against the Vietnam war; yet I want to argue against the tendency to disparage the unions.

It seems strange to have to write a defense of unionism, of justifying collaboration with the union movement. If anything, the shoe ought to be on the other foot. Perhaps it is we who have to prove to the men and women who make up the unions that we are trustworthy allies. No working class in the world has accomplished as much in bettering the conditions of the people as has the American working class. There were indeed many influences favorably disposed to this development, but the uncommon militancy of the American worker was not the least of these. It was not all frontier and Henry Ford imagination. Ford had to be brought to heel by union organization, and no auto worker needs a before-and-after picture of what unionism has meant in his life.

If workers in other lands have frequently displayed greater social or political vision, no union movement has fought more splendidly than the American for economic (hence social) advances. None has so elevated the dignity of the worker with a union card, nor in doing so better defended the basic democratic structure of our society.

I do not mean by this that unions or union leaders are not open to the severest criticism, that they are not ever mean or internally corrupt, that they do not call for investigation, pressure, improvement, or freshen-

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ing. All that and more. *But, damn it all, they are ours, and if we turn our backs on them, we reduce ourselves to puling ineffectiveness.* Use a sledgehammer if need be to get the Negro into the unions, but there is no purpose behind that if we do not see that the union is where the Negro needs to be to underwrite the dignity of his civil rights achievements. At their worst, and obviously excluding yellow-dog racketeers and other barnacles, the unions stand as a guarantee of democracy.

It is one of a number of simple equations that are available to us. A democratic society is a society in which unions can operate freely—is a society in which people debate openly —is a society in which people assemble at will. Mix the metaphor and use the unions as a litmus paper: a social system turns the color of tyranny or of democracy by how it reacts to free union organization. In the here and now, the unions are our first line of strength in encouraging social advance if we work *with* and *in* them. As simple as that.

But how is it possible to work with the unions when, except for rare and weak exceptions, they do not share our concern about escalation of the war? It is a fact that the AFL-CIO leadership, notably George Meany, has not only endorsed Administration policy, but has seemed to go beyond it in ferocity. If Meany has even espoused unconditional negotiations, which is at least the formal Administration position, it has escaped my attention. Nor can we say that other union leaders who are known to be more concerned with extending the social involvements of the unions have declared themselves differently.

How then can we work with them? The question, however, is really better put, how not? Meany is not the labor movement. Some union leaders are better, some worse. But suppose we take Meany as representing the union leader. It is embarrassing to state so simple a supposition, but Meany does have a right to his opinion, and a duty to air it, and there is no indication that he is betraying the consensus of the union membership, though he would still be privileged to voice his opinions on the war in Vietnam no matter what that consensus was. And obviously, any union member has an equal privilege and obligation to speak out for *his* views. Who says that all issues reduce themselves to the one issue of Vietnam? (And one view on what is to be done there too?) However much we try to engage the unions in broader social issues, their prime responsibility is to protect the interests of the working class, on a higher and higher level, to extend the protection of union organization to the unorganized, and through the discharge of these functions, to serve wider social ends.

If Meany, however, should say that we cannot admit Negroes to unions, that we cannot organize the unorganized, that we cannot press valid demands *because* of the war in Vietnam, he would indeed be violating his trust, and we would have to insist that he fulfill his obligations as a union leader. This kind of thing has happened, as when the "no-strike" Communists opposed labor militancy after Hitler broke his pact with Stalin and Russia joined the Allies in the Second World War.

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In the meantime, we have urgent business at home, and it needs to be pursued in common even if, and as, we go our separate ways on Vietnam. Congress has to put teeth into civil rights legislation, and it has before it a proposal to remove the iniquitous portions of the Taft-Hartley Act. And much, much more.

If we don't like Meany's views on Vietnam, we can criticize, denounce them, do whatever we think is proper in a proper way, without throwing our allies out of the window along with the dirty water of their position on Vietnam. It is a condition of democratic life that we had best adjust to if we expect our views, in all their variety, to get a wider hearing. It is our job to convince the rank and file union member, and the broad mass of people, not repudiate them.

I do not mean that we work with anybody at any time just because there is a coincidence of agreement. There are rats I prefer not to work with, and won't. For example, I think we have to be vigilant about internal democracy in the unions. But I don't look for comrades in this concern among Birchites or other kinds of scoundrels who would destroy union independence and organization completely. I do mean that the area of common interest with the unions is so wide, and so basic, that if we do not make common cause where common cause is indicated then we have abandoned any hope of succeeding in more than sporadic forays.

This is not the place to discuss Meany's credentials as a union leader. (It's kind of an impertinence in this context anyway; he may well have the greater right to examine the credentials of people on "our" side). Nor is that the issue on which the discussion depends. The inescapable and central (if tautological) fact is that the unions, and the union leaders, are committed to—unionism. So long as Meany upholds unionism as a basic right and first-line defense of workers everywhere, he upholds, by that evidence, democracy! In this elementary sense, then, I, a socialist, am delighted to be unreservedly on the side of Meany, who is not, or anyone like him, so long he defends the right of independent union organization and struggle against all those who, for whatever reason and with whatever rationalization, justify the cold-blooded suppression of free unions in any country—whether they be frankly anti-socialist like Franco in Spain or parade under the banner of "socialism" as in China, Russia, Cuba, North Vietnam, or wherever!

The problem is not really whether we can work with the unions. We share certain decencies, and therefore we can and must work together in the innumerable ways that push us forward. So Meany or Reuther do not share our position on Vietnam,* or join our protest. They have their position, and we challenge it and them, and proceed to whatever action we feel moved to undertake. The greater problem is how far we can go in working with less savory elements—e.g., the Maoists—who despise the very liberties we hold dear. But that is another discussion.

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* My views are, essentially expressed in the statement signed by several people which appears earlier in this section.

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Paul Cowan

7. On Those Who Burned Themselves

Most of the reactions to the self-immolations of Roger LaPorte and Norman Morirson have been fatuous defensive, or at best, beside the point. Their acts have been seen largely in terms of individual psychology, when in fact they might serve as metaphors for a sense of frustration which is rather widespread. To limit speculation about LaPorte's suicide to questions of the relationship between his act and a Catholic pacifist's moral code; or to remarks about the way his choice of a street in front of the United Nations reflects our national mania for public relations; or to tactical considerations of whether self-immolation is the best way to oppose the Vietnam war is to avoid the most troubling questions which his suicide raises. Could a man in possession of his faculties be so depressed about the war in Vietnam, so driven and so lonely, that suicide —as a final act of commitment, of solidarity with the suffering—might come to seem as rational as, say, the publication of an anti-war advertisement in the *New York Times,* or a march down Fifth Avenue on a sunny afternoon?

A child does not have to read Dostoevsky in order to ask himself whether he would consent to die if he knew that his death would bring about another's salvation. Some of us who reached consciousness when atomic war was an accepted fact of national life have shared fantasies of a salutory suicide. The monks who burned themselves in Vietnam may have suggested the form of Laporte's act—but the idea had spread through part of a generation long before the present war.

A child or an adolescent may see his own martyrdom as the sole way of ending the war, bringing about disarmament, halting a national outrage like McCarthyism; but as one grows older in America one comes to accept the argument that change must be brought about democratically, through reasoned discussion and temperate action. One realizes that thoughts of salutory suicide might, like all efforts of single men to impose their wills upon a nation, reflect authoritarian impulses.

It is possible that all political expressions and actions are in fact vague metaphors for stronger, more submerged feelings. A Negro who may have been frustrated in his desire to become a lawyer or a banker, finds himself sitting nervously at a lunch-counter—flaunting trespassing laws, risking beatings or jailings—to get a hamburger which his stomach is too knotted to digest. A young student from a Northern college whose politics began with a self-interested fear of nuclear war might find himself teaching school in a small Mississippi town because there seems no better way to express his feelings. Both of these metaphors, once selected, relate to

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tangible, immediate situations which a certain amount of physical suffering and a considerable amount of patience and intelligence will eventually ameliorate. But is there any metaphor through which a man can directly express his opposition to a distant war unswervingly supported by the most powerful government in the world, his own?

Actions bred by ideas have consequences beyond what the authors of those ideas may have imagined. A man sits in New York writing essays on the immorality of segregation. His words make a deeper impression upon the coming generation than upon his contemporaries. So the young—energetic, unattached, in search of their identities and their nation's—set out to realize the literary views of their elders. What they do is not always rational—sometimes they behave impulsively, immaturely. But by now they have the power that is acquired through collective action, while their elders have a different sort of power, gathered after years of thought and writing. There must, therefore, be long and painful debates between people who should naturally be allies.

At least these debates are about manageable subjects, about actions and alliances which can be realized. What about the young man, however, who has taken seriously essays written by his elders which describe America's inability to deal with Communist countries? The young man who has read and believed books which detail the horrors of nuclear war? Who has been taught in his history classes that past wars, like World War I, were both unnecessary and unreasonable? Now that the reality matches the descriptions, where are the authors of the books? They have taught him in the past, abstractly—why don't they take action in the present to lead him, or at least to show that they share his outrage? Yet, so far as the young man can see, if his teachers are at all disturbed about the war in Vietnam, their anger is diffused into insubstantial organizational debate and not directed to the situation itself. Of what community can the young man feel himself a part? The ideas he acquired in his youth now explode into actions which are mediated neither by a group of sympathetic friends nor by the possibility of success.

Beyond this: there is a generation of young people now coming of age in America that has consciously set out to serve others. They have been expressing their private, midnight emotions through constructive work. But now, faced with the demand that they join the army and kill the sort of people they have wished to help, they are becoming distracted, desperate. If they were to work in Mississippi, to join the Peace Corps and spend a few years in a developing land, they would busy themselves assisting the same kinds of people—the women, the children, the peasants—whom they would be forced to shoot in Vietnam.

Their plight is almost universally misunderstood. When they create a slogan like "build not burn," asking to be exempted from the war so that they can continue to serve creatively, they are regarded as cowards, draft dodgers, or Communists. Although their ideas of service were influenced

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by professors, writers and politicians who had bewailed the apathy of a previous generation—who had told them that social action reflected the best of the American tradition—now, in time of war, there seems to be no room for them, or what they represent, in their country.

Suppose a young man wants to bring to the war in Vietnam the tools of analysis he acquired in college. He has been taught by his professors that independent thought is an important human value and now he applies what he has learned to a subject that happens to be controversial. He reads articles, perhaps writes a few; goes to lectures, perhaps delivers a few; involves himself in a democratic, educational form of action—the teach-in. But he sees that spokesmen for the government are often unwilling to debate, even as he hears the teach-ins described as one-sided. The vague questions he began with are sharpened, reinforced. The few defenses he hears of the government's position seem closer to propaganda than logic.

More removed than ever from power, the movement he joined turns in upon itself. No longer is the war in Vietnam discussed, but instead the teach-ins: the debate is about the debate. The war itself continues to accelerate, and the government is shown to have frequently lied.

So the young man, largely misunderstood in his desire to serve, unable to find answers to his democratically-expressed questions about the war, turns to something called direct action. How else can he make his plight visible, how else can he reach the public with his doubts? He marches down Fifth Avenue, attends rallies, watches draft cards being burned. In many papers he reads that all of this is subversive.

But the protest actions are not effective ways of drawing attention to his dilemma, he realizes. The arguments they are supposed to set forth become obscured by the participants' sloppy dress, unruly behavior, defiant language.

I think the writer who would have best understood Roger LaPorte's suicide is Andre Malraux. Think of Che'n in *Man's Fate*: a man whose imagination was fixed upon the sheer facts of suffering, who grew weary with intellectual hair-splitting and organizational strife. He had to act, desperately, on his own.

Most people are not like Roger LaPorte: we can live with our despair and hope that tomorrow our voices will be heard, that the suffering will end. Perhaps we are deluded. In any case, Roger's suicide, and Norman Morrison's, horrible and apocalyptic as they were, represent an extreme version, yet also a faithful one, of the frustration and loneliness some of their contemporaries feel.

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Marshall Sahlins

THE DESTRUCTION OF CONSCIENCE IN VIET NAM

I. *Tea in Ambush*

Villages in the Delta are laid out mainly along the canals and rivers. "Village" may be the wrong term. The houses stand side by side, strung out for hundreds of yards along a road or path paralleling the water course. Besides, one community virtually runs into the next; so that the line of settlement extends sometimes for miles, punctuated periodically by a short stretch of forest, a pagoda, or a focal market-place town.

It is often said of South Viet Nam that the day belongs to the Government, the night to the "Viet Cong." Perhaps it is better said of An Phu district that the day belongs to the Neolithic, the night to the Cold War of the mid-twentieth century. Driving that day to the South Vietnamese Popular Force outpost at Khánh An, I was in Samoa or New Guinea again: the thatch roof houses on stilts in endless procession along the road; the shaded front verandahs overlooking decorative tropical shrubs; the big clay pots in the yard and mats spread out for sunning; the solid fishing boats drawn up on the shore; here and there a woman placidly tending kids or a man mending nets—hardly anything to suggest a civil war, an invasion and least of all a social revolution other than the neolithic one that brought man from the mobile hunting condition and allowed him to settle down and accumulate a modicum of simple wherewithal. These people, I thought, are historically out of it. Probably they have had little conception of it for centuries, and that mainly in the form of a more or less alien landlord or tax collector, a monk, and the few goods from elsewhere they got at market. They have been more subjects than participants in the cultural evolution of the archaic civilizations of Southeast Asia, of the state but not in it, a petty agricultural existence which civilization has rested upon but not incorporated. The Neolithic is here joined as a tributary to the Bronze and Colonial Age, yet preserves its charac-

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ter; so the state is an historic medley of incongruent and opposed nations: the one urban, wealthy, sophisticated and latterly comprador, the other seeking to perpetuate against exaction "the idiocy of rural life."

But at night, in this war, the two historic epochs join in a ballet which, when it is not a dance of death, is a moment of high comedy. Our Popular Force, platoon strength in black peasant clothes, took stealthily to the road for an ambush position at a river crossing several kilometers from camp. There was something of a moon: one could make out the man several yards ahead and perhaps the man ahead of him, and then one or two others in the parallel line on the opposite side of the road. Somewhere in the middle were two American advisers. Somewhere ahead was a scout with a walkie-talkie; toward the rear was another. We went quietly, watchfully, a little afraid, hunched forward with carbines at the ready. A few hundred cautious steps, then you stop at a signal from the man ahead, crouch down, look for something, go down on one knee. Then off again on the all clear. Thus we moved, armed black phantoms. Toward what? Last night the platoon had been ambushed just near here. You could never tell.

Certainly not from the incongruent setting. We were carrying guns in the midst of life, where the people live: house by house, family by family, casually going on with it, all along the road we took so seriously. Our antics seemed to make a difference only to the dogs, and then the racket they raised made even our silence ridiculous. (I understood then that whoever controls "the hearts and minds" of the dogs will win the war.) Still their howls brought no response from the houses. The people stayed just so, arranged around their hurricane lamps in peasant set piece: a sequence of lighted dioramas in a darkened museum, before which passed beings of such *papier-mâché* purpose and expression as to raise the question of who was the imitation of humanity. Sometimes an old woman would peer out and say something to us. She was kibitzing the war. For the most part, the family went about its domestic business: an old man working over some tools, a grandmother fussing with crying grandchildren, younger men and boys talking and laughing softly, a woman singing; in one house a transistor radio blaring Vietnamese music at a spellbound family—and all their neighbors hundreds of yards around. Life went on, and why not? The Neolithic (transistorized) was the human occupation; while the black gang with carbines and recoilless rifles and walkie-talkies and Americans seemed as meaningful to this existence as the court ceremony of the Inca emperor.

Around here—in this "loyal" area—it's not a civil war, I thought; nor a revolution, nor an invasion from the North. It's the latest thing

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in warfare—a medieval war. The feudal barons with their kept knights ravage through the countryside to engage in mortal combat for forty days. The peasants go back and forth between the lines, unconcerned except to see that they don't get ravaged, or to sell a few things to either or both sides. The peace will certainly affect them, but is it their war—as war?

Last night the platoon had gone through a similar performance. They settled carefully into an ambush position at the river. Waiting tensely, one of the American advisers was startled by an arm softly placed over his shoulder. Fortunately, before he could react the thin voice of an old village-woman penetrated his senses. It was Mother Courage. "You boys want some tea?" she asked, with plaintive ingratiation. "Go 'way," he said, "we're waiting for someone."

I had got to this district, An Phu, by courtesy of the U.S. Information Service (now part of the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office). It was rather a model-village tour: an area of Hoa Hao, a Buddhist reform group now solidly (for the time being) with the South Vietnamese Government. But An Phu may have been a perfect model, complete with all the flaws of its political virtues. The Hoa Hao allegiance is probably more practical than principled and based fundamentally on "to thine own self be true." Subject for years to opposition and oppression, the Hoa Hao have fought everybody: the Viet Minh, the Diem regime, the Viet Cong. Today they accept the *Realpolitik*—and the weapons and good payoff—of the American presence, decisive in this province where there are no Arvin (Army of Viet Nam) regulars. It seemed to me quite clear from conversations with the Hoa Hao commander that it was the Americans with whom they were now allied, not the Government to whom they were loyal.

The late intensification of this war between Good and Evil seems to bring no decision between them so much as it throws into relief a submerged third term of incommensurate value: life. Recalcitrant under pressure, life insists on manifesting itself in all manner of ways —refugees in the cities, revolts in the mountains, desertions in the army, or perhaps just as studied indifference at An Phu. The involvement of the peasant must always have been uncertain and incomplete, *particularly on the Government side.* It is difficult to see how the peasant can be "on" the side—"for" the cause—of a world from which he has been structurally excluded. Historically, peasants have their *own* side: their family, their fields, their village. Saigon surely offers little alternative to this allegiance. It is allegiance to oneself as a human being, to what one knows as the right human condition. Outsiders must appear as

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only more or less damaging—or beneficial—to this condition. Foreign warriors in the land may open a new, complicated calculus of alternatives. Even so, what appears to us as a choice of sides may present itself to the peasant as a tactical choice of masters—with a meaning culturally incomparable to the American who is "for" America, or even the Republican party.

II. *Piastres de Resistance*

At the Saigon airport I handed over the immigration form to the Vietnamese officer. In the space next to "Purpose of your visit" I had written "tourist." On August 5, 1965, it was an irrelevant purpose. But was it any more irrelevant than the things other Americans were doing in Viet Nam?

Actually, I am an anthropologist and an academic critic of the war. Neither is a qualification, in the view of Administration supporters, to speak on Viet Nam: one ought to have been there. I always thought it a weak retort, if only because the critics were as a rule better informed than the tropisimatic adherents of official policy; for another thing because the record compiled by Americans who had been in Viet Nam making and implementing mistakes suggested they had no understanding of Viet Nam or of their own existence there. To have been in Viet Nam does not make one an expert but perhaps something of a fool or a victim.

Nevertheless, as an anthropologist if not as a critic I had to accept the argument: one should go into the field. I spent six days in Viet Nam: mostly in Saigon, one day in Chau Doc Province (An Phu District) and half a day at III Corps Headquarters, Bien Hoa. Much of the time I passed with U.S. Information Service people, to whom I had offered the proposition that they try to convince me they were right. They accepted—"only in America!"—and put me in touch with others, civilian and military (though not with the gung-ho types I asked to see), and with the war (such as it was) in An Phu. These six days did not make me an expert—and I hope not a fool or a victim.

It is difficult to become an expert anyhow on things that aren't what they seem. Every day I saw something or learned something that made the country appear irrelevant to what was happening to it. After all, we are fighting Chinese there. There are no Chinese there. So *Vietnamese* die by way of demonstration. War is the continuation of Madison Avenue by new means; death becomes an advertisement—and "we mean what we say." The single most important and general condition of the American war in Viet Nam is its irrelevance. But to kill irrelevantly is a contradiction in terms. All the compromises

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and the self deceptions of Americans, and all the brutalization, originate in this contradiction.

But the most obvious incongruity is that we are defending the "freedom" of South Viet Nam. The absurdity of the statement is not fully manifest by the existing Government [?]. To speak of the Government disguises the issue of the class of "brave and determined people" we are involved with, of who are our natural allies, who our enemies. It confronts you as you drive into Saigon. The rich men's big houses are protected by great iron gates and barbed wire deployed along the tops of thick walls. At the American Embassy and other U.S. establishments the same architectural motif is repeated—with variations as minor in social meaning as the differences between the Mercedes and the Mercuries that jostle aside pedicabs in the crowded streets. Together with a large number of Saigon friends who are doing well while we are thus doing good, we are under seige.

The defense of freedom in a lately colonial country takes on elements of a class war. I met a few of our lesser collaborators; also a former enemy:

> The district chief at An Phu was established, with servants, in a well guarded headquarters; the exterior decor was barbed wire again, and a guard detachment of Regional Forces. A mandarin, proclaimed by the long nail of his little finger; a captain in the army, graduate of a French secondary school. His father was a businessman and a landowner who left an estate of some 60 hectares in Long Xuyen Province. He apparently is joint heir with his brothers, and maintains a home in the provincial seat. The estate, he said, is occupied by 60 tenant farmers. Officials at this level and above are appointed from Saigon.
>
> Mr. B. works for the Voice of America as a researcher and occasional broadcaster. Born in Saigon, his father was a clerk in a French company. Mr. B. was educated in a French college and then embarked on a life-long career of collaboration with foreigners. He worked before the war and through 1944 as a clerk for a French lawyer. In 1945 he was employed by Mitsui (Japanese). During the French Indochina War he worked for local newspapers and a French periodical. Now, for the Americans.
>
> Mr. L., a radio broadcaster for VOA for the past eight years, was born in Haiphong and came south after the peace of 1954 because he, "could not live with the Communists." During the French-Indochina War he had deserted from the Viet Minh and gone over to the French Army, where he served as an interpreter. Mr. L. interviews VC defectors and refugees from VC areas for broadcast materials. He related some interesting cases: a VC regular who defected because he saw a comrade killed for reading a Government leaflet; a farmer who fled from Long

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An Province because he saw his relative, a rich farmer, killed by the VC for refusing to pay taxes; a VC captain, "an intellectual," who defected because, as he told Mr. L., " 'The Communists only served one class!' "

"What class was that?" I asked.

"The poor," said Mr. L.—the captain was angry because "intellectuals" were not treated well.

I later discussed this conversation with an American employee of USIS. He warned me that there are Viet Cong everywhere in Saigon!

I, myself, interviewed only one VC defector, an instructor of anti-Communist revolutionary cadres at Khánh An (Chau Doc Province). He was from a Central Vietnamese middle peasant family. As a Viet Minh he had lied to the authorities about his background, saying he was of poor peasant origin. He was terrified by the North Vietnamese land reform of 1955-56, when middle peasants were axed. He said he decided then to get out as soon as he could. Infiltrated South in 1963, he immediately defected.

I asked all these people at the end of the interview if they would like to question me. They put it in different ways, but everyone expressed concern that the Americans might lose patience and withdraw.

Critics of the war point to the contradiction between our announced defense of "freedom" and the character of the South Vietnamese Government. The criticism does not go deep enough. It is not a question of what Government, but what ruling class, what *power* we are supporting—and creating—against "Communist aggression." It becomes in general a question of what type of society we offer as an alternative. A massive amount of American money is poured into Viet Nam. Part of this money corrupts, breeding prostitutes and vendors of "feelthy pictures"; the larger share is simply corrupted and a Vietnamese elite becomes the latest beneficiary of American affluence. The colonial comprador outlives colonialism. He enters into symbiosis with the Cold War. Marshall Ky says the land speculators who drive up prices around the American development at Cam Ranh Bay will be punished. The black marketeers and other profiteers will be punished. But under what constraints does the Government of Viet Nam operate? Large Chinese merchants have a major influence on the Government, a senior USOM (U.S. Operations Mission, the AID program) officer told me, an influence that increases in direct proportion to their wealth. He said too that the contracting business was the going swindle. The still uncontrolled black market is testimony to a large flow of U.S. dollars out of the country, for safe deposit in foreign banks and the import of prohibited luxury goods.

Meanwhile, back at the village—

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The scene that day at An Phu was reminiscent of the colonial payday described by Aubrey Menon in *The Prevalence of Witches,* with overtones as degrading and cynical. Through the good offices of the local U.S. Special Forces Detachment, 10 selected families of a hamlet several kilometers from the base were ceremoniously to receive food doles, and the children of the hamlet school to get new school kits (though there weren't enough of these to go around). The goods had come down through USOM. Everyone was waiting around when I arrived—it turned out they were waiting for me; it made the most propaganda of a limited supply. The American commanding officer and some non-coms were there, and the commanding officer of the Vietnamese Regional Forces with his bodyguards. A little hollow near the school made do as a ceremonial ground. We stood back on a rise above: it was not an American function; "we're only advisers here." The masters of ceremony were a VIS (Vietnamese Information Service) officer, a Vietnamese nutritionist and the hamlet chief. They were down in the hollow with a portable loud-speaker system shouting to the assembled 40 people who were standing several feet from them. Ten heaps of food lay in two rows on the ground. The VIS officer spoke first. He made it clear to the people what the food meant: as one of the recipients told me later, now they would turn in any Viet Cong they saw. The nutritionist spoke briefly—too briefly, I thought, considering the exotic character of the foods. Then the hamlet chief proceeded to dole out the food heaps, calling each family by name and insisting the family representative—many were widows—come over and stand next to his or her food pile. Everyone was so conscious of us on the hill, especially the shy women being given food.

These families had been selected by the hamlet chief and a local committee. I don't doubt they were deserving—the man I talked to was a landless peasant, unrelated (he said) to the hamlet chief—it's just that they deserved better. The 10 families had been selected from a community of 2,000 people. According to the Sergeant in charge of it, this food program had begun about nine months ago. A settlement of 2,000 people could expect to be visited with food packages about every two-three months, although this hamlet had been given food only once before, if that. And what was the benefit of years of American expenditure in Viet Nam? Each family received 100 lbs. corn meal, 5 lbs. bulgar wheat, 5 lbs. maple syrup, 6-7 lbs. powdered milk and 1 gallon of cooking oil. The Vietnamese eat rice and prefer it—with corn only on occasion.

The motivation and dedication of American AID people is beyond question and not at issue. Many, I understand, work tirelessly under dangerous conditions to bring a modicum of betterment to the countryside. Likewise the small Special Forces Detachment I saw at An Phu

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was committed to a program of medical and economic aid for the people—the Peace Corps of the War Corps. But these slim measures of good intention have to be put in the balance against the huge, unplanned subsidization of decadence in the cities to determine a final reading on the American presence. It is not simply that much more goes to bad causes than to good. Hijacked American dollars in the cities capitalize a whole social system, and one in which just this unequal distribution of wealth is proper, a constituted condition. The compradors of Saigon express nothing of the Delta and the Mountains and feel nothing of them; economically and ideologically they are counterposed to the people and the resources of the country. The fate of the people, therefore, is not mitigated by small aid in the countryside; it is sealed by big robbery in the city.

Saigon, one cynical American said to me, is full of Kennedy idealists who have discovered the facts of life. I thought it a good *mot* as far as it went, but incomplete. He might have added that crossing Kennedy idealism with the facts of life produces a curious political hybrid: a hard-headed surrealist. I spoke with several of the tribe, middle to senior officers mainly, in their air-conditioned sanctuaries at the Embassy, USOM, USIS. I wanted to know how they related, morally at least, to the Saigon cats growing fat on American aid whose interests rather contrast with the dying people. I was reproached for my naiveté: "every Eastern country is full of graft and corruption; it's just like that and always has been" [and therefore always will be ?]. One or two said that conditions were improving because the present Government included dynamic young leaders who took the people's well-being to heart. The most general sentiment was that if the Government could somehow be stabilized, the problem of "corruption" would somehow be solved. I had come up against standard American innocence of society: "who is the matter"—as if it were just personalities and not a political structure of economic interest; that the accumulation of wealth is a mere question of "graft" and "corruption" rather than an economic formation of society, a matter of excess rather than a constituted relation to the national economy and the underlying population; that, despite the circumstances, a government could be established on some basis other than the prevailing distribution of wealth and power, apart from its constraints, and become more the executive committee of the people than of the comprador.

The last is anyhow ruled out by the "advisory" role of American personnel (civilian as well as military) in Viet Nam. In the decisive sense it is an American War: it is Viet Nam's tragedy to have been chosen the battleground for America's stand against the forces of evil.

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Technically, however, we are just "advisers." I had always thought this was put out for international and home consumption, to make the American intervention palatable for whoever might be inclined to swallow it. But I misunderstood. The "advisory" capacity is taken very seriously by Americans within the country, especially by civilian officials, and it has internal functions much more meaningful than the international propaganda effect. At one level, it is a concession to Vietnamese national feeling; and Americans have a complementary need to believe and practice it. As a denial of any colonial status or intentions, it provides for Americans an acceptable meaning of their existence in the country. Beyond that, it serves as a convenient institutional means of personal dissociation from the sufferings of Viet Nam, sufferings largely inflicted by the American presence—which is one's own presence. To be an adviser is to be involved yet free of the place, to indulge a sense of duty yet disdain responsibility; so it becomes a prefabricated barrier erected wherever and whenever the ugliness intrudes into consciousness, a denial that one is implicated by what may be going on. It is a moral anesthetic. (And I venture to say that the necessity for moral anesthesia is one reason there are so many versions of truth, why it is so difficult to determine just what is going on in Viet Nam).

At the institutional level, which is perhaps the critical level, the function of the "advisory" role must be judged from its effects. The effect at every order of organization from hamlet to nation is to interpose obstacles to American direction of Vietnamese affairs, and so give free play to indigenous forces and interests—especially self-interests. Thus even as America generates powerful economic and political force in Viet Nam, it turns around to deny itself the leverage. The free floating resources are appropriated instead by local collaborators for construction of their own version of Vietnamese society. We give them the advice to do good and the power to do as they please. We say we are "helping the Vietnamese to help themselves," and that's exactly what they're doing—helping themselves.

The "advisory" capacity is a new chapter in the relations between the West and the underdeveloped world. It is a Cold War epilogue of nineteenth-century colonialism. For all our anti-colonial protestations we perpetuate a colonial condition in the country.

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A serious argument against American withdrawal is the bloodbath that would ensue in South Viet Nam when the NLF gains control. But against this one might consider the bloodbath without forseeable

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end going on now, and the ruling class of South Viet Nam to whose tender mercies we would confine the peasant. The escalation of war may be narrowing the alternatives for the people to an end with misery or a misery without end.

Refugees are streaming *en masse* into Government camps—where they live, newspapers say, in unspeakable conditions. Many Americans I met in Viet Nam are convinced the Viet Cong have been lately violating their own principles, stepping up economic pressure and terror in the countryside, for their very success has bred control and logistic problems. Washington officials have said that VC terror is the simple explanation. I asked one of the Vietnamese who interviews refugees for Voice of America—principally, however, on agricultural matters—why, in his opinion, the peasants come over to the Government. His prompt answer was the "bombing"; the people, he said, want security for their lives and peace for their work. An American VOA employee present at the interview insisted I get the meaning of "bombing" straight. On my request for elucidation the Vietnamese said "bombing and fighting," the fire from both sides. Then he went on to relate that provincial officials who have accompanied him in talks with peasants have several times "asked" him to erase complaints about "bombing" from the tapes. The refugees are supposed to say they have fled from VC terror to a happy life under the Government, he said. The provincial officials indicated that the "bombing" need not be broadcast. (Charles Mohr writes in the *New York Times* of September 5: "Already more than 5 per cent of the population has fled into refugee camps. Although it is popular among Washington officials to say that the refugees are fleeing from Vietcong terrorism, some officials on the scene are quite willing to concede or even to volunteer that the majority are fleeing from the insecurity of the countryside and that air strikes are the largest single cause of that insecurity.")

I had a number of experiences of this kind, times when I heard a Vietnamese or an American in the presence of another American of official position report something compromising to American ideals, policy or the Washington line on Viet Nam. The incident must be repeated often, as a circumstance of the American presence in Viet Nam. On the occasions I could observe it, I was interested in the reaction of the American who was thus suddenly confronted with damning information on which he would have to make some reckoning—like the American VOA employee confronted with censorship. If not exactly a moment of truth, the American's response gives subtle intelligence of the critical battle of this war: of how much of America, of what America has meant to us, can be consumed in Viet Nam. The Ameri-

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cans I have seen in this predicament were good men and intelligent. But they blanked out, every one of them. Intellectually they refused to come to terms with it. Morally, they passed. Some said nothing. Some spoke of Viet Cong crimes, as if to justify our own or our South Vietnamese agents. Some glossed over the reported incident as exceptional, as not happening most of the time. And some shrugged, referred to the feudal-oriental character of the country, then asked what one could do since "we're only advisers here." It is, I repeat, an important point. If we are whored by our commitment, if we must lose ourselves in Viet Nam, we lose the war—whatever the military outcome.

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The contradictions of Viet Nam may thus reflect themselves in the everyday behavior of Americans. Among military personnel, of course, such translations of big structural events into terms of ordinary existence will take other forms. Still the American military adviser who turns his back on the torture of Viet Cong prisoners by South Vietnamese soldiers is the khaki counterpart of the VOA civilian who closes his mind to compromising information. But these seem advanced stages of moral decay, people now dangerously close to a final plunge into brutalization. Unless one is so disposed in advance, it may take a certain initial disillusionment with Viet Nam to reach this point, a disillusionment that undermines local meanings of the war, leaving one either with the Cold War conviction that it is necessary to stop this Chinese-inspired aggression, Viet Nam notwithstanding, or else without any conviction at all. I had a glimpse of this earlier phase among American combat troops at Bien Hoa, most of whom were comparatively new arrivals and had seen comparatively limited action. It was enough exposure: Viet Nam was incubating in them. Yet, one or two resisted the infection.

> They were eight Army enlisted men—at least some were draftees—with whom their commanding officer (knowing I was "a professor against the war") had generously given me ninety minutes' privacy. And there was also a ninth: an officer of junior rank who came up to the jeep around which we stood, listened to what we said, and asked then if he could have a word with me because there were a few things I ought to "get straight."
>
> Seven of the men did not at all question their purpose in Viet Nam. We had to "stop the Communists from taking over here," or else "they'd go on to Hawaii." At the same time, several had experienced the recalcitrance of Viet Nam, its disengagement from what was supposed to be its own life and death struggle, and they were disturbed by it. A

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Negro private brought it up—by his own compulsion, for the discussion was open just then—and others seemed to agree. He didn't see "the people here" getting with the war. They hold bicycle races in the village while he is on a field problem. He wondered angrily why they did nothing while we fought "their war," fought to make them "free from Communism." As for the South Vietnamese soldiers (and this is I think a very common complaint), they aren't worth a damn: poorly trained and undisciplined, they talk and smoke on patrol and cannot work as a unit.

Every war and every army has its complaints. But Viet Nam could foster a new type of American military dissenter, an anti-ideologist, a man whose life has been interrupted when it did not seem threatened and yet, come upon the distant scene of emergency, sees there a people not so much involved in a fight for their lives against Communist expansion as a flight from their deaths—perhaps at American hands. I asked these men what they thought of the statement of Lt. , who had refused assignment to a Special Forces outpost and expressed the sentiment that the war "wasn't worth a single American life." All disagreed—except one. To that moment silent, he spoke now unabashedly: "All the people and all the ground in Viet Nam are not worth a single American life." He believed this, he explained, because he has a high regard for human life, American and Vietnamese; and many people are being needlessly killed because of the ideological views of a few Americans, the President and those around him. They say we are here to defend South Viet Nam against Communist aggression, which is a threat to ourselves, but for himself he does not believe it. The commitment to Viet Nam is all out of proportion to the importance of Viet Nam. He waxed Lippmannesque: "If we start here, we'll soon be all over the world doing the same thing. It's not worth it to America." He was a soldier in a Light Brigade: "The people here have been fighting guerrilla war for 20 years; I don't know anything about that kind of warfare." I asked him which he would choose if it came to a question of American involvement or NLF control. He would pull out—"because I'm selfish—I don't think the Communist control of Viet Nam will concern me in my lifetime."

The men left and I remained with the young officer who wanted me to get matters straight. He was not new to the war but almost through with it, twenty-nine days to go, and now there were several things he had to say about it. He spoke from notes he had just made, and I repeat his points here. I am obliged to insist that I do not present his views as facts of war, as necessarily true in specific content. But they are unequivocal truth of another kind—they are an American experience of Viet Nam:

1. The officer had it from "an informed source in a position to know" that Arvin desertion rates jump from 25 to 40 per cent whenever American troops came into an area. He was seriously concerned.

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It meant to him that Arvin has no inclination to fight; that, neither brave nor determined, they "would rather have us do the work for them."

2. He has heard on good authority—"though it is not confirmed and must be"—that on occasion Arvin units fire upon U.S. units in battle, in order to make the situation look worse and encourage a greater U.S. involvement. "I want to know," he said, "if this is reported to the American people, and if it is reported to the President, and if not, why not? And if it is, what are we going to do about it? Or does it just stay in MAC-V [Military Assistance Command, Viet Nam]?" In his opinion such actions as these would have the effect, desired by Vietnamese, of relieving their military participation and increasing direct aid to the local economy through military and other assistance—aid that would find its way to local vested interests.

3. When we were preparing to build up a landing base in [a certain coastal] area, why did we have to negotiate with private land owners for space at so many piastres per acre? This is war; we are defending them. He is sure we didn't pay rent to the French in World War II for the privilege of fighting for French freedom. Nor was this compensation for hardships caused to civilians. Leasing land, he said, is distinguishable from compensations. [Note that the officer did mention a particular area, but I am unable to pin-point his transliteration of the Vietnamese. The New York Times reported what seems to be an analogous incident on September 15, 1965: the U.S. "acquired" 30 square miles near Ankhe from the Vietnamese Government for the newly arrived First Cavalry Division].

4. I had talked with the others about civilian casualties. In that connection, he said, "a lot of officers if given the opportunity would bomb the shit out of all the villages around here. A great many have the urge and the mentality." He had "so many times heard it said, 'let's drop the load on that village.' " He has not seen it yet, however, and thinks it probably never will happen because the brigade commander wouldn't have it. But it is a definite streak in an interesting number of officers—"and," he added, "just what the VC would want."

5. He seemed to know my own position, and since I had talked with the other men about the criticism of the war in the States, he wanted to insist that, "The criticism of the war is extremely healthy. It concerns me that many military men are critical of the critics and want to deny them the constitutional right to dissent." He is "upset" by the career officers who speak only of "beatniks," and whose response is "those guys ought to be brought out here and sent on patrol to get shot!." The career officers fear criticism because they are put in jeopardy by it. "If we were less militant, they would lose their jobs and have to return to civilian life, where they are not fit for anything." He wondered, in this regard, to what extent the situation in Viet Nam is accurately reported insofar as the facts are purveyed through the military.

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As we walked slowly together toward the commanding officer's tent, he said I could draw my own conclusions from all this. I responded with the obvious: "You mean to say that the war is being escalated because of the South Vietnamese desire to be relieved and make a fast buck, complemented by the mentality of the American military?" He made no objection. In parting he remarked that if Viet Nam wants peace, and if peace means VC control, he for one is willing to accept it. If the VC are elected in a free election, he said in response to my question, he must go along with it—"for God's sake, it's the only honorable thing to do." And he added then: "If they want peace at any price, not be shot at, the freedom to raise a few crops; let them have it. These are common wants of everyone, aren't they?"

III. *Losing the Hearts and Minds of Americans in Viet Nam*

"China" is indispensable to the existence of Americans in Viet Nam. The fixation has its own internal, Vietnamese dialectic. But it begins from external conditions, from the Washington Cold War policy and its confrontations with world events. An outsider can attempt only a superficial and partial analysis of the Washington line and very little on its fundamental causes. Clearly it proceeds from an injunction of sacred ancestral ideology, the Dulles demonology, which defined the struggle against the forces of evil. The evil is the "International Communist Conspiracy," known also in its emanation of "Aggressive Communism" and appearing in Viet Nam as "Chinese Expansionism." America, medicine man to the world, is impelled to Viet Nam to exorcise the evil spirits. But it was not a simple process of divination that led to this move. The policy for Viet Nam seems to have developed from the intersection of the demonology with at least two important events, the Cuban missile crisis and the *détente* with Russia, which have impressed themselves firmly and in certain ways on political consciousness. The missile crisis is understood to have spiked Russia's guns for the forseeable future. The *détente* is taken in evidence that when a Communist revolution generates an economic stake in the world, and when the revolutionary generation with its heady ideas of world uprising dies off, a Communist power ceases to be aggressive and instead evolves an interest in the status quo. Transferred to China, these understandings dictate a policy of buying time for the revolution—that economic development and generational replacement might exhaust its fervor—and, in the meantime, during all that period in which it is dangerous, cordoning the revolution by a strong military stand and preventing its export. Viet Nam is the Asian analogue of the missile crisis; therefore, a critical tactic. The "domino theory," moreover, becomes unsuppressible. Its function is to explain the American action,

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and as the only reasonable explanation of *that fact* it becomes immune to contradiction by any other fact of life in Southeast Asia.

Such seems to be the hard-headed surrealism. In Viet Nam, however, the strategy does not present even so rational an appearance. It has to be discussed in more primitive terms. For one thing, the key decision-makers are not there; one sees only partial intimations of the grand design among the few who can seriously reflect on it, and among Americans in general only a vulgar *idée fixe* about the Red Menace. Besides, the strategy here is refracted through the ugly circumstances of Viet Nam, which reshape it into something of an obsession: stopping the Chinese threat is the kind of end that will sanction adoption of any means—even, as I shall tell, Chinese means. We are losing the hearts and minds of Americans in Viet Nam. Joining battle with the evil spirits by ritual techniques of blood-letting, we get covered all over with blood ourselves and become ourselves dark forces in the land. It is a classic mythical denouement. Between the medicine man and the spirit of disease there is a close relation to begin with: a set of shared assumptions about the nature of illness, its infliction and its cure. And as they struggle for supremacy over the inert body, only shaman and spirit can seem real to each other. The body becomes immaterial, something merely that each attempts to possess and manipulate to defeat the other. The horrifying quality is that the evil spirit is a construction of the medicine man, and though his operation prove a brilliant success the patient may die from it. In the end the medicine man is indistinguishable from an evil spirit.

Americans in Viet Nam hold it as a basic expression of purpose that there we oppose Chinese Communist expansion. I encountered it among men of fighting ranks and among their officers, among staff members of U.S. civilian agencies and among their senior officials. It is the expert opinion of those we employ as political experts. (Vietnamese collaborators, I found, are apt to put it most directly, almost as if the NLF was Chinese.) The confrontation with China has the character of an unquestionable premise of our involvement. Politically aware Americans find it possible to believe it the higher wisdom even though they are unable to trace the chain of NLF command beyond Hanoi. Everyone knows that Communist China is expansionist. Everyone knows too that we are faced in Viet Nam with Communist subversion, which if not contained here will have to be faced again, closer to home. That we are fighting China follows with the force of a categorical syllogism.

Perhaps it is the higher wisdom; still, it gives Viet Nam a certain air of insanity. Paranoids are after us. The death of Vietnamese is un-

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related to their lives. Do we mean to indicate by these deaths that the Chinese must stop threatening us? Then we are involved in killing people to show other people that they should stop threatening us. Or do we mean to show the Chinese they must stop threatening the Vietnamese? Then we are killing people to show other people that they should stop threatening the people we are killing. The "Chinese Threat" obscures in advance the nature of the enemy. We cannot know who he is, or what he wants. So we destroy in advance the possibility of deciding if he is really our enemy. The counterpart on the political level is the total failure of American policy to support, or even to recognize, nationalism and its human aspirations. Not recognizing it, we succeed in destroying it. Opposing it, we drive it into self-defeating dependence upon major Communist powers—and thus in the end obtain the confrontation we sought from the beginning. In my experience, nationalism is simply not discussed by Americans in Saigon. Vietnamese nationalism is a dead issue, buried and covered over by Communist aggression.

But there is a reason for the madness. Without it one could go insane. Even if "the threat of Chinese expansion" did not exist in Washington it would be necessary to invent it in Viet Nam. The objective conditions make it impossible to sustain any other image of the American presence. The lack of freedom mocks our "defense of freedom." The military dictatorship mocks our "defense of democracy." The indifference of the people mocks their "brave struggle against subversion." The thought that these people have been suffering war for 25 years must be repressed. And shall we admit our responsibility for the misery of Viet Nam? How shall we face the innocent victims of our weapons? Conscience must be destroyed: it has to end at the barrel of the gun; it cannot extend to the bullet. So all peripheral rationales fade into the background. It becomes a war of transcendent purpose, and in such a war all efforts on the side of Good are virtuous, and all deaths unfortunate necessity. The end justifies the means.

> I stood one morning outside the Psychological Warfare office at III Corps Headquarters, Bien Hoa. Clearly I was an alien: a civilian and an academic dissenter. The bare courtesy of the reception I had just had inside did not trouble to conceal it. Now a young officer came out of the building. With a curious politeness he handed me a newspaper, saying that "a compatriot" of his (but not of mine?) wanted to present it to me, and I should especially consider the inside spread of pictures on pages 4 and 5. The paper was the *Observer,* a weekly published for U.S. forces in Viet Nam. The officer was a little surprised when I asked if he could spare any other issues. He did not understand

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my motives, that I wanted to know what the *Observer* seeks to teach those who read it. But that general point is not important. The important point is a specific one, dictated by the man who anonymously gave me a present: the inside two pages of the July 3 edition. It meant something critical to him, and he wanted me to be convinced by it.

The two-page banner read: " 'A New Glorious Exploit,' Broadcasts Communist Radio." Underneath were seven bloodsoaked pictures of the My Canh restaurant bombing in Saigon of June 25. Most of the photographs, such as the one captioned "Evacuating Innocent Child," showed Americans coming to the aid of shocked and bleeding victims, many of them Vietnamese.

Should we share our "compatriot's" understanding of the moral? He might indulge himself in the hate of evil killers at the expense of indifference to human pain and death. But no judgment of these pictures should be made in the absence of memory. The American soldiers who see the *Observer* have already seen certain other pictures. They have looked upon the slaughter of villages, contemplated the civilian victims of American bombs and shells—perhaps not just in photographs. If they are then outraged at the My Canh, it is a cynical lie. They distinguish between "good" and "bad" innocent victims. Human agony has no meaning; the meaning is external, a judgment of those who inflict not those who suffer. The outrage at suffering is indifference to suffering. The soldier outraged at this deception of Vietnamese misery has been prepared to commit it.

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Advanced anti-communism trades places with the enemy. It becomes opposite-communism, and "opposites" are things alike in every respect save one. The final stages of American dissolution in Viet Nam will be marked by imitation of the enemy's techniques. I have heard it foreshadowed in the talk of Saigon officialdom: *discipline,* a senior American civilian officier told me, is what the South Vietnamese Government needs; *power,* he said, is the only thing the Chinese can understand; *history,* he said, will prove us right. In a remote provincial outpost I found two Americans who had appropriated as their own draconic Chinese methods of interrogation and indoctrination ("motivation" is the American newspeak). The forced destruction of people's beliefs is no longer properly described as something "they" do. Torturously exacted confession and conversion are no longer things we fight against. These are now part of our own arsenal, weapons of our own struggle.

The two Americans were leaders of a "motivation" team working among Vietnamese Popular Forces. The team included four Vietnamese instructor-cadres, two of these ex-Viet Cong. The dominant of the two Americans was a field representative of a civilian agency; he was assisted

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by a Special Forces officer. Both were highly qualified, competent in Vietnamese language and custom, and dedicated to Viet Nam and their vision of its future. Their program was anti-Communist revolution; they were training Popular Forces as revolutionary cadres. The texts were classic Communist handbooks on revolutionary warfare, books these Americans studied and clearly admired; it does not go too far to say they were disciples, or at least revisionist disciples, of Mao Tse-tung, Ho Chi-minh and Che Guevara. The revolutionary "techniques" were copied in fine detail. (I was given a pledge card that the Americans issued to Vietnamese trainees; it listed "The Four Principles and Eight Rules" of cadre behavior, apparently an amendation of "The Three Rules and the Eight Remarks" that Mao developed for partisan warfare against the Japanese.) The Americans insisted, however, on one departure from Communist attitudes: alongside self-criticism they encourage the troops to question their instructors and formulate their own views. The indoctrination team moves from outpost to outpost, living in with the troops while "motivating" them.

I lived in with them for a night and a good part of a day. They briefed me and allowed me to see the work for myself. But it is not of this guerrilla program that I write. It is of a discussion I had with the Americans about torture and the transformation of VC prisoners to anti-communism. The two Americans allowed they had some experience with it, and some ideas of how it is properly done. I recorded most of that discussion and will excerpt parts of it verbatim. But first allow me to develop the context.

The interrogation methods the Americans described are copied from those used most effectively by the Chinese, as they themselves explained. (Of course, there are precedents—for example, the Inquisition.) The treatment seems a compressed and abbreviated version of the procedures used on American P.O.W.'s during the Korean War. The interrogator has at most four or five days before he must send the prisoner on. Physical torture is precluded. A special type of "mental torture" (their term) is instead inflicted. But it aims not merely at eliciting military information. The prisoner's disclosures are at the same time a betrayal of his cause and a confession of his errors, a renunciation of belief. The betrayal is the first phase of a "cure" of Communism—the American civilian kept likening the process to the rehabilitation of alcoholics. If the technique really is effective, and the Americans claim it is, I think it must be because of some rather special qualities of revolutionary warfare and warriors. It has to be understood that a VC prisoner comes in with certain comprehensions and expectations that are deeply entwined with his revolutionary ("Communist") com-

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mitment. A guerrilla movement depends decisively on secrecy. Its members are visible daily to the enemy but must be unknown to him; they maintain a hinterland conspiracy of silence; a single traitor wrecks the organization of a whole village, perhaps a district. The guerrilla thus understands that secrecy is a first principle of the revolution. But by the same token, intelligence becomes a first principle of the counter-revolution. The prisoner, therefore, expects to be tortured for information and ultimately killed if he remains steadfast. He meets his interrogators prepared to resist the worse: it is a test of his revolutionary soul.

But by a carefully calculated approach, the interrogator can from the beginning disappoint the prisoner's expectations, disarm and confuse him. Instead of torture the guerrilla finds himself in the company of an "enemy" who nevertheless treats him with respect, even befriends him, feeds him, makes him comfortable—which is to say, profoundly uncomfortable. The relation the interrogator seeks to effect is one between them as against the world. For even as he binds the prisoner's wounds, he systematically invokes the threat of "the others"—that there are these others (Arvin regulars) around who want at the prisoner and have "more basic ideas" of how to interrogate him. (The Chinese in Korea invoked the North Koreans in the same way when dealing with American P.O.W.'s). The interrogator is protecting the prisoner, shielding him against the "big, ugly outside world." Thus the bond between prisoner and interrogator is forged, the captive caught in a deepening dependence upon his captor. At some point the latter feels he might press for reciprocity. The guerrilla yields some minor information. Yet emotionally it is not slight: it is a fundamental betrayal of himself, his comrades and his cause. Still, he is told the information is nothing, not enough, that he will have to do better or the others will move in on him. The trap has been closed. The interrogator is now the only one in the world with whom the prisoner has anything in common. Behind are the people he has sold out, ahead those who would kill him—and only the interrogator can help him. The revolutionary is likely to break completely. It is a moment of extreme anguish—"the lowest point in his life in terms of human meaning and existence" (the American civilian said). Yet again, in a disorganized and probably unintentional parody of Chinese techniques, the prisoner learns his confession is still not good enough: he cannot unite with his captors; he must have further "processing" at a rehabilitation center. So I understand the procedure.

Something must be said as well of those who described it to me. First—and it is a thing seriously to consider—these two Americans are

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not strangers, not people who have been metamorphosed by some satanic forces to a point beyond our understanding or recognition. Met on a college campus or in a business office, they would not attract unusual attention. Their attitudes toward Viet Nam are indeed more scholarly than demonic. They want to involve themselves in the country. They profess with sincerity their respect for the people—so much that they actively wish them a better fate. For the first several hours of my visit, we had only sparred in a rather formal way. It was not until they saw me sit cross-legged on the floor of a Vietnamese house, and with them eat Vietnamese food with Vietnamese people, that they, these two Americans, accepted *me*. They did not give the impression of evil. On the contrary, they presented the appearance of good.

And now consider this interview, what they said and what they revealed of themselves.

The main protagonist—identified here as "Mr. X"—describes himself as an "agnostic atheist," but clearly he believes in the devil if not in God. In fact, his is a holy work: to exorcise the communist devils possessing Viet Cong. He undertakes the prisoner's "conversion" for the prisoner's own good: he is "helping" the man, saving him. I asked, "How do you offset the damage to yourself?" "Your belief," he answers.

Why do these Americans so intensely need to crack down the prisoner, to convince him he is wrong, they right? Is it because they need to convince themselves? The officer ("Captain Y") says that if you don't try to break the prisoner, you're admitting he's right. And "Mr. X" makes a curious slip: he speaks of an "emotional *inter*dependence" between the prisoner and the interrogator, where he means to discuss the dependence of the prisoner upon the interrogator. I sense these men are identified with the prisoner, that they have themselves under the knife, that the prisoner's conversion will validate their own integrity. And so inevitably they fall into a hopeless contradiction. For if their own righteousness is at test in the prisoner's response, then they need too to fail. The prisoner's successful resistance is the interrogators' greatest satisfaction: his strength proves their strength, his will their will, his conviction their conviction. There is no question of Mr. X's admiration of the prisoner who will not be broken. "Tremendous," he says, "just tremendous." Then he lies when I ask if he admires this man. And at the end he lies the ultimate lie of Americans in Viet Nam. Notwithstanding he had just described a specific prisoner who would not yield, he denies he was ever involved in such an interrogation: "because we're advisers—in every sense."

Here are excerpts from the tape. (A heavy "dot" in the transcript indicates that a portion of the interview is skipped over; three dots,

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that a portion of an answer is elided; and a word in parenthesis followed by a question mark indicates an imperfect rendering on the tape and my guess of the word involved.)

MR. X: At this time [the prisoner] kind of feels an emotional dependence upon you because for two days you've been protecting him from the big outside ugly world that he doesn't understand: feeding him good chow, talking with him, calling him a (*can-bo?*) of the NLF, not the derogatory term of Viet Cong . . . Then you indicate that this nice treatment that he's had so far [has] not been disinterested good treatment, that we expect his cooperation. We're cooperating with him in a sense; we expect cooperation from him. This again reintroduces the whole issue of the big ugly outside world. What's going to happen to him now? Well, he might tell you a couple of things, beginning with rather innocuous things. Well, you can imply that you knew that already, what you're really after are better things and this might rather (uncalm?) him. Then you might say, "Jeez, that scrape you got on your shoulder . . . it obviously needs attention; we'll have to give you some penicillin." And while you're giving him the penicillin, you're telling him that, "You know, there are these other types of people who just . . ."

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MR. X: Actually again, this is the technique that Captain [Y] . . . and myself have been trying to promote in an advisory relationship. Again, it's a technique that's been used most effectively by the Chinese, in which you've pulled the man out of his familiar environment: he's dependent . . . upon you for his continual well-being. And even though the prisoner may (resist?), it's kind of an emotional interdependence that's created, and what you try and do is (use?) this emotional interdependence in such a way that he comes to the point where he *must* tell you what he knows.

SAHLINS: It's in effect brainwashing—is that the point of this?

MR. X: No, what it is, is breaking him down. But . . . once you've broken him down, it comes to the point where he wakes up in a sweat one morning and tells you, "All right." Then he tells you the names of the two people in his cell; or, he gives you the location of the camp that he just recently came from. Then you're through with him, in practical terms. You've got what you needed to continue operating. But at this point, if you really believe in anything yourself, what you've got to do is give him something to hope for before you send him back for further processing. Because you have just brought this individual to the *lowest point in his life* in terms of human meaning and existence. So at that point, that's when you've got to stress that, "Well now we're releasing you for further processing. But for you, what you've just told us is the beginning of a positive affirmation. We just can't process you right into our unit now; because you don't know what we

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stand for and what we're fighting for, but we hope that some day you will be joining us." See, we don't have time to get any brainwashing. The Chinese can do that because they have P.O.W.'s for months and months and months. If we get a guy, we've got him for two to five days, and then he's out of our hands. In that two to five days, we've got to get the information we need. But we will not get the information we need by physical torture. We've got to get it by an emotional and mental torture. And you can do that because that's what they're least adequately prepared for. It's what Americans are least adequately prepared for when they find themselves in the other side's hands.

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SAHLINS: What kind of control do you have over Arvin types of interrogation [i.e., physical torture]?

MR. X: Well again, that's an advisory function. And what you're trying to do is—this is just a traditional, feudal Asian society; Mainland style—and what you're trying to do is change the course of warfare in Asia. To some extent this has been done: the Chinese People's Liberation Army; it's happened probably in the Japanese Army, the Japanese Self-Defense and Home Defense Armies. But until the end of World War II, we always thought of the Japanese Army as a real cruel, vindictive, bunch of cutthroats. Well it turned out in post-World War II analysis that the Bataan Death March was something that they handled to the best of their ability, given the available transport and the way that they would have handled their own prisoners. They just moved them, and they moved them as fast as they could. People who couldn't keep up the pace in some cases were helped and in some other cases—just according to the individual guard—were bashed and thrown aside. Vietnamese to our eyes seem rather cruel sometimes to prisoners, but they're not doing this with any ideological vengeance. They're doing that because that's just been the bent of warfare in Mainland Asia for a thousand years, and what we have got to try to do is sophisticate it, and tell them, "Look, that's just not the way." It's a slow process; we're attempting a reformation of a whole society.

SAHLINS: What practical is being done to discourage this kind of thing?

MR. X: Well, guidance on the spot—

CAPTAIN D. (SAHLIN'S ESCORT) It's up to the individual advisors—

MR. X: The individual advisor giving guidance on the spot.

CAPTAIN D: Sometimes it's successful, sometimes not—

CAPTAIN Y: In most cases, it's not.

SAHLINS: From what you say about mental torture, you wouldn't make any distinction in the morality of either kind [i.e., physical vs. mental torture]?

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MR. X: Hell, no! I don't make any distinction in morality at all: torture is torture, and when you fuck around with a guy's mind and his whole basic *raison d'être,* you're *really* hurting him—especially when he's prepared mentally, spiritually, for the physical torture.

SAHLINS: Then the attempt to discourage Vietnamese water torture . . . is just because the other type [mental torture] doesn't offend American sensibilities as much?

MR. X: No, it's not because of that. Because we don't concern ourselves here with American sensibilities. We concern ourselves with what will work.

CAPTAIN Y: It's relatively ineffective.

MR. X: It's ineffective. It may sound hard-boiled to say that we don't concern ourselves with American sensibilities—but we don't. We're concerning ourselves with Vietnamese sensibilities.

SAHLINS: What about the sensibilities of the Americans who are involved . . . the person who's torturing?

MR. X: To most of the Americans, to most of the simple-minded Americans who get involved in Viet Nam—that's all the *boobus Americanus* that H. L. Mencken spoke about—undoubtedly they think that the mental and emotional torture we're talking about is the least objectionable, because they've never really paused to seriously reflect about it themselves; or perhaps they did not go through the experience of being a P.O.W. in the Korean conflict themselves. And they can probably tell you, "Oh, Jesus, I'd try and stop that physical torture, because I know it's just wrong,"—you know. But we think that we're looking into it a little more deeply, and we see that the mental and spiritual torture that we bring a man through to the point where he voluntarily gives you the information is pretty rough stuff to get involved in too. But it works.

SAHLINS: How do you offset the damage to yourself?

MR. X: Your belief. Your belief: you have to sincerely believe that in the long run you're helping this man. It's like an AA cure. If you're just breaking the guy down for the sake of getting a poor helpless alcoholic who's hipped on NLF propaganda to admit that he was wrong and give you the information, then you're going to send him out in the street a crushed derelict, then there's something wrong with you. But you have to really believe, as we do—although we get discouraged sometimes by our [Vietnamese] counterparts—you have to really believe that you're *helping* this guy to something better.

SAHLINS: Conversion from Communism is involved in the torture.

MR. X: Conversion from anything to anything involves a certain degree of self-torture. We just accelerated the process because we need that fucking information.

SAHLINS: This is better for him?

MR. X: He's alive, and you can still help him . . .

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MR. X: Most Americans, unfortunately, don't bother to think deeply about the stuff they get involved in and they make superficial judgments: "Well, it's wrong to torture this guy physically because we're all part of the same (background?)"—

CAPTAIN Y: If you ask you'll get probably 80 per cent of the people [U.S. military] will say, "Well, I didn't get involved in it. When they capture them, when they capture the Vietnamese Communists, I just turn my back and go and have a cigarette."

MR. X: They take a drink from their canteen and light up a cigarette. And that's discouraging . . . I'd rather get—not get involved in it, not in the actual physical torture myself—but I'd rather be right there and see it done, and then laugh like a horse when it doesn't work and they don't get the information. And then in the long run you're affecting the situation when you just laugh at this guy and say: "Look, you think he's gonna break? So you cut up his stomach a little bit and his insides fell out . . . He got the last laugh on you, because he didn't talk a bit." And maybe it'll make the guy think, you know, and ten times later, after ten more people have faded out because he physically tortured them, maybe he'll say: "Okay, wise American adviser, what would you do?" . . . We have a moral responsibility, it seems to me, once we've stepped into this country to involve ourselves in the complete fabric of the country, and to understand it, and then try and help the Vietnamese to look at some different alternatives . . . We should be acting as a catalyst, as a thinking catalyst in Viet Nam. But you cannot be a catalyst unless you know the entire fabric of the thing. And lighting up a cigarette when they bring a prisoner in for questioning is, well, that's an immoral—

CAPTAIN Y: It's just like saying, "It doesn't happen."

MR. X: That's just about the height of immorality, I think. To think that you can just absolve yourself. That's saying that every man *is* an island; or at least when it is comfortable, when it's comfortable for me to be an island unto myself, then I am; and the bell's tolling for that poor fucker under the knife, not me. That's real bad. And again, it's a simple-minded approach.

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[Mr. X had mentioned that one of the rules imparted to the cadres in training was "be kind to prisoners." I asked if that wasn't a rule he disobeyed.]

MR. X: Well, if the final result of it is—it's a cruel process—but the result of bringing him closer to you, of conversion—it's a tortuous process of conversion—but the result is a kind one . . . If you believe in your program, this is what you do . . .

SAHLINS: Do you believe in breaking people down so they agree with your program? And breaking them down justifies the end?

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MR. X: No . . . That's why we would not take a guy who's been broken directly into our unit at this time . . .

SAHLINS: Either you will rehabilitate him by converting him to your belief or you're going to leave him a mental wreck . . . Can your ends be so God-given as to give you this right among humanity to do this?

MR. X: I don't know. I don't really believe anybody's hands are God-given. I'm an agnostic atheist.

SAHLINS: No, your ends. I'm not asking you for religious beliefs. What I'm asking is, do you believe you have the right to impose by this method:—

MR. X: I think I've got the right to try. Nobody's got the right to succeed—guaranteed. But everybody's got the right to promote and proselytize what they believe.

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CAPTAIN Y: If we do not break this guy, if we do not attempt to change his ideas then in essence what have we done? We've said that basically he's right!

SAHLINS: No, that isn't so. One agrees to disagree as a matter of principle in a democratic system.

MR. X: Oh wait, this is [where] we begin . . . I've had some tremendous conversations with these guys, and we begin by agreeing to disagree. But you can soon get this guy so flustered and so shaken up that before he knows it, he's agreeing with you—because his assumptions to begin with were rather vulnerable.

SAHLINS: But that isn't the issue here. The issue here is whether you will impose your will by this technique, which is—

MR. X: We don't know what our will is yet.

SAHLINS: You will impose your ideas by this technique—

MR. X: What ideas?

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SAHLINS: . . . I asked the question, how do you justify the effect upon yourself of acting in this way? And you said you're doing the guy a service. Now, I'm asking you, do you believe you have the right to impose your will on somebody; impose what you believe—

MR. X: We are not imposing our will. We are not imposing will. Even after you've broken him and gotten the information, he's still a free agent.

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MR. X: Not impose will—if he fails to accept . . . an alternative. And not *our* alternative; there are a number of alternatives. Because in essence that's what we're trying to show him.

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SAHLINS: You don't accept that [i.e., that there is only one way of doing things and nobody can dispute it], but you accept the other premise that there are many ways . . . So as a matter of fact by this process you either transform him from that belief into one of a range of acceptable beliefs, or you will leave him a mental wreck—

MR. X: But we don't leave him this way. We have brought him to a point where he realizes that the faith he placed in his previous system was essentially not powerful. He has volunteered the information. At this point he's got to find a new way. He's got to have a way out of his dilemma, and the people at the training centers should be skillful enough to point out to him a number of alternatives.

SAHLINS: We come back to the question: whether you have the right —by these techniques, which are external to him—to deny him [the] belief that he came in with in his hand and only accept a set of alternatives which you propose?

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MR. X: Listen, I've met guys . . . We had a guy in Phu Yen Province in the summer of '63 who was the Propaganda Director for the NLF in that province; and boy, we just worked ourselves literally ragged in four days trying to bring that guy to the point where he'd tell us a few things, and he was tremendous—just tremendous. Didn't tell us a thing.

SAHLINS: You admire this guy?

MR. X: Tremendous—tremendous.

SAHLINS: So you admire more a person who will not acquiesce to the thing that you say is right than one who does?

MR. X: No, not true. I didn't say that at all. I admire a guy who will tortuously admit—if he really believes—that, "Oh Jesus, I never thought about that before. Those guys [NLF] they told me something else; and you're really doing something else." A guy like that who will examine his previously arrived conclusions and change his mind, I admire that—

SAHLINS: That's very admirable, but it doesn't describe the process you went through, which was to leave him in a situation where either he takes this set of alternatives which you give him, or he is a mental wreck.

MR. X: Remember, this was an act of *affirmation* on his part, where he yields the information voluntarily. But it's only a beginning; it's only a beginning; and it's not fair to leave him at the point where he's just made the beginning.

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MR. X: It's just like an alcoholic. An alcoholic can attend the meetings and he can see everybody else get embarrassed; and if he doesn't want to join them he can just back out again. But once a guy begins to join this little society of alcoholics—

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CAPTAIN Y: These cadres we have [as instructors]—these ex-VC, ex-NLF, ex Viet Minh—they all in some way or another gave up something in their own mind when they turned, came to the Government.

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MR. X: . . . what we're trying to show these guys when we're interrogating them, through this tortuous process, is that you're not better [off] under the NLF. "Your whole series of assumptions has got to be reexamined here, and we're here to help you reexamine them. And, Jesus, there's some guys here have got some more basic ideas of how they'd like to examine you, but we're just holding these guys off . . . and we'll take good care of you." That's the kind of a dirty trick—[but] when you've only got four days . . .

SAHLINS: Have you done this with Viet Cong?

MR. X: We don't do anything because we're advisors—in every sense.

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Emanuel Geltman and Stanley Plastrik

THE POLITICS OF COALITION

With the two approaches presented in the article below, and the article by Tom Hayden which follows it, we open a discussion on the problem of coalition politics.—EDITORS

I

Virtually all parties, except the most narrowly doctrinaire or authoritarian, are coalitions of a sort. In Europe the broad coalitions have developed inside parties which operate within a general ideological, very much a class, alignment for which we have never found, except in pale and ineffective imitation, a corresponding political frame—a Labor party, a Socialist party.

Where most European parties have had a declared ideological underpinning, the coalitions represented in the major American parties have been ideologically diffuse. Their operational mode has been political rather than principled, in terms of the issues of the day (broadly viewed) or of power in its crass and self-serving aspects (narrowly viewed). They have presumed to speak for all interests, and in fact have spoken essentially for the dominant social interest—tacking here and there to accommodate this pressure or submit to that need.

Few Americans participate actively in the affairs of their party, except in elections—and no small matter that! To a great extent they have belonged to one or another party because their fathers and fathers' fathers belonged, or because it is the regional thing to do. Nevertheless, it would be idiocy to assume that if worker and boss choose to believe they have an equal stake in American society, they are indifferent to how their respective needs are served. Within the party framework there are breakdowns of social interest and representation. Well or poorly, the socio-economic relations and conflicts of the society do get reflected in the party structures.

Majority rule reflects subtle shifts of power in empirical response to democratic pressures. On a national scale, and generally through the two-party system, the elections have by and large reflected the

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degree of popular involvement or general indifference. At moments when the issue has been sharply, if crudely, put, the response has revealed a sharp awareness of interest.

No one misread the object of Truman's 1948 "Give 'em hell" campaign which confounded the pollsters and the political wise guys. It was not crucial, at that moment, that Truman was a no less fervent advocate of capitalism than Dewey, that he had shamefully dropped the bomb, that in another context he was prepared to employ federal controls to undermine a strike. As the elections shaped up, the issue became, or appeared to become pro- or anti-labor, and those who caught the spirit of that confrontation voted accordingly. If you wish to be profound you can say the 1948 election distorted this issue, but unless you wish to be silly you must acknowledge that it also reflected the issue.

The American people have, for the most part, repudiated splintery political investments. In this, and allowing for differences in political sophistication, our experience has not been so far different from the European as some may think. Unquestionably more sophisticated politically, the Europeans have been no less motivated pragmatically. They have clung to and revived, where they had suffered extermination by war and fascism, the mass organizations which offer the security of promising effectiveness.

Like it or not, the American people have turned their backs on experiments outside these familiar party structures which appear to them to have served democracy well.

This is not to say that they have not been willing on occasion to respond to invention. In a sense, third party movements are as deeply ingrained in the American evolution as the two-party system. Whether Bull Moose or Farmer-Labor, these movements, however, have never survived the moment of creation or local (state, city) peculiarity. They have mostly run their course quickly and disappeared back into the major parties.

For a while the idea of a labor party captivated socialists; it seemed so obvious a solution to the problem of "American backwardness." What better way to bridge the gap between the economic militancy and political innocence of the American working class? In moments of stress, labor leaders (including some of consequence) went so far as to give comfort to the idea. Yet the idea never got off the ground, and not because the leaders weren't as good as their word. The people—the ones we have to convince, or we are nothing—remained massively indifferent.

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There have even been local socialist victories, and for a glorious moment when Eugene Victor Debs touched the hearts and minds of the people, a million of them voted Socialist in a national election. Since then, for American Socialists, it has been mostly decline. Decline as a movement, not at all as an "influence." There is nothing to be ashamed of in the socialist influence, a great deal to be proud of. Much that is now commonplace in American life—social security, unemployment insurance, union protection—were once socialist*ic* ideas, championed principally by socialists in coalition with (a point to remember) social reformers of another hue. These commonplace and still grievously inadequate measures encountered every bit as much opposition as any radical measure proposed today.

Frustrations are easily explained and justified. And there is something noble about going down to defeat in an honest effort to win. The one unforgivable crime is to enjoy futility. It is easy enough to simulate energy and activity. In the end we can be as irrelevant in militancy as in complacency. The tally-sheet is scored by issues met and understood, crises elevated to achievement, progress measured in escalating goals.

II

> . . . only a new style of politics can appeal seriously to recently registered Negro voters and liberal young whites in the South who seek a platform that will finally bury the Civil War and regenerate the South. Educated women with no meaningful role in contemporary society, elderly people stripped of their identity by social as well as occupational retirement, communities threatened by capricious shifts in defense spending, young people tired of privatism as a response to the hypocrisy and insensitivity of contemporary public life—all these could be appealed to by a new politics based upon a fresh kind of political association. [Charles D. Bolton, *The Nation,* May 25, 1964].

"A new style of politics" is certainly the order of the day. But the content of that new style can be given a wide range of meaning from isolated, if brave, sorties to turbulent intervention in American political life *as it is lived.* Surely the happiest—and easiest—solution for the radical condition is to think we can agitate the disaffected into our welcoming organizational arms—if only they would come! It is not quite that easy to rub against the realitites of American politics, to educate people, convince them, move them. Easy or not, it is possible to accomplish these ends if we use the resources that are available to us *in coalition* with others of (more or less) similar purpose and mind.

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1. Who?

Speaking of the civil rights movement, Bayard Rustin wrote (*Commentary,* February 1965):

> Neither that movement nor the country's twenty million black people can win political power alone. We need allies. The future of the Negro struggle depends on whether the contradictions of this society can be resolved by a coalition of progressive forces which becomes the *effective* political majority in the United States. I speak of the coalition which staged the March on Washington, passed the Civil Rights Act, and laid the basis for the Johnson landslide—Negroes, trade unionists, liberals, and religious groups.

Rustin here names: Negroes, trade unionists, liberals, and religious groups. We could add socialists, students, radicals, young and old. These are not fixed or equivalent bodies, but categories of support into which we can reach. Some Negroes are in CORE, NAACP, SNCC, SCLC, and so forth; the great majority are in no organization, and are leaderless. Organizationally articulated or not, increasing members have demonstrated their willingness to undertake any challenge, however severe.

By the same evidence, "students" are not in themselves a movement, and most students haven't the remotest interest in self-sacrificing social struggle. But large numbers have demonstrated a radical concern with social issues, and have in fact given of themselves heroically to the civil rights movement.

Some groups exist—a union, a Negro or liberal organization, a student body—and they can be brought together in formal consideration of issues and actions. Beyond these lie the millions who can be drawn into expressing their commitment to social progress. Can we depend on these groups, these individuals of good intent, these "elements"?

Liberals? In the chauvinism of radical argument, "liberal" can become a word of opprobrium. On the record, that is often a piece of arrogance. Some liberals have been steadfast champions of liberty, others have scampered for safety when the going got rough—but the affliction of cowardice has been witnessed among red-hot militants too. The radical and the liberal tradition have always had many areas of contact in extending the realms of liberty—as in the enactment of civil rights legislation. Those of us who are socialists can debate ultimate ends with the liberal, but we have a present need to make common cause on a great variety of urgent political issues.

Trade unionists? It is true that in the puffy, bureaucratized, un-

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imaginative unions it may be hard to recognize the powerful, progressive forces they have been and often still are. But it was also hard to recognize the socially explosive materials that surrounded the indolent, narrow-visioned and smug if troubled, craft unions of Samuel Gompers and William Green. John L. Lewis, no mean bureaucrat himself, shook the union movement into new dimensions of struggle and organization, and eventually victory—impelled by workers who refused to be excluded from union organization or its benefits, and were ready to get rapped on the head, to sit-in, to challenge the mass-industry giants.

The unions—as social institutions, not as a given local or international—remain essential units of social advance. Some are more far-seeing, better led, than others. All of them face anxieties and frictions of which they have not yet begun to take full measure—the millions of unorganized, the fear of automation, the absence of democracy, the pressure from Negroes to full admission into all, not only some, unions.

The unions are, obviously, not a law unto themselves, and never were. Reflecting basic aspirations of the working class without whom (whether in the socialist canon or any other) society cannot operate, they are the natural allies of the civil rights movement on the simplest level of desire. This basic connection exists even if, here and there, because of prejudice or tight circumstances, clashes have appeared. It is up to us to make the connection clear. Where ignorance, narrowness of vision, and cupidity thwart progress, they must be educated to yield—and allies for that contest will be found within this very same union movement.*

The point has central significance today as Negroes, for example, seek jobs, better jobs, and protection on the job. What other machinery exists, or can be devised, to protect this worker on his job, to help him achieve decent pay and conditions? The civil rights organizations can open opportunity, but beyond that point the unorganized in the plant cannot do without the solidarity of union organization. Martin Luther King (in his speech to the Illinois AFL-CIO Convention) is right to "call upon labor as the historic ally of the underprivileged to join with us in this present struggle to redeem the soul of America." And labor is right to call upon all of us, precisely in the interest of

* Since this article was written, the American Federation of Teachers, a remarkable organization in many ways, has announced through its president, Charles Cogen, that the union has appointed a full-time coordinator to expand its participation in the Freedom Schools program which last summer set up schools for over 4000 Negro pupils in the South. This is coalition, inspiring and useful, in action.

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the underprivileged, to enlist in the campaign to press Congress for repeal of Taft-Hartley's 14-B.

Religious groups? Whether Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish, the change in the churches of the United States has been remarkable. Congregations—many, perhaps most—have not gone along, but it *is* something when leading denominations select Negroes as Moderators, when nuns scorn abuse to walk proudly on the march, when churches are deeply involved in the civil rights issue not in the spirit of dispensing charity, but as participants in social action. Of course, this revolution in the attitude of the churches is primarily a response to the Negro revolution, and to such other searing events as the extermination of the Jews under Hitler. But it is a marvelous response nevertheless.

None of us has an option on sincerity. No "element" has the right to sit in judgment on another except as each displays its devotion to democratic welfare in practice as well as program.

2. Why?

The civil rights protests have already seen the coalition in operation. In the context of present-day social relations that coalition has been radical in effect. Our object is to turn that same coalition of forces toward broader political objectives. Liberal and radical pressures have achieved a modest level of welfarism in this country. But our welfare state is still at a primitive level in comparison with European standards in some respects, such as family subsidies, and we have only scratched the surface by the standards of need and opportunity. We may, as socialists, see beyond the welfare state, but toward that end we do share with unlettered sharecropper or troubled academic a stake in extending the limits of welfarism.

We can chip away at this issue, or that. We can move ahead with this sit-down or that march. But increasingly it becomes evident that we need to consider many issues and activities. These can be embraced in greatest effectiveness only by bringing them together in political force.

3. What?

This coalition is not a "united front" except as it meets in a given action or conference. Nor is it a formal pact that will be announced on a certain day. It is a relationship of forces, and in insufficient ways, it is already here. It works, it exists intermittently, as in the March

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on Washington; and we try to extend its force into all aspects of domestic life. Its parts pursue their separate aims, as the various parts of the civil rights movement operate independently, and sometimes differently, yet all to the same end. It cannot be held together by resolution or formal regulation.

There will be all manner of disagreements, and a good thing too; we dare not suppose that discussion can be suspended. The very quality of democratic association implies argument, even vehement argument. Where the coalition disagrees, its components go their separate ways —but at least there is the occasion for dialogue, the precious opportunity to convince each other. There are bound to be major disagreements on foreign policy, and these should be debated openly and vigorously, without impeding the effectiveness of coalition, let us say, in pressing full citizenship for the Negro, or proposing anti-poverty measures. The shared ingredient is a willingness to speak up and act for democratic institutions and procedures.

We can neither prescribe nor blueprint the "how" and "when" of coalition. The conception itself is not particularly novel; millions of Americans have been testing its utility right along. However, in *our* milieu, in the context of our beliefs, it is a different approach, and we will not be able to scale its possibilities or its limits except as we have the experience of participation. There is at least one requirement that is elementary and self-evident: if some actions and campaigns are necessarily left to the arrangement of leaderships, the basic political force of coalition action cannot make itself felt without mass support. Whether in the language of "mass base" or of "constituency," this is where effectiveness and responsibility lie. The content of coalition ultimately rests on our ability to win support for our ideas and respect for our seriousness by working alongside the people we hope to influence *in* factory, hospital, school, or club.

Under other conditions all this might be very tepid. On the American scene, it is by its very nature radical. If we were in a "revolutionary" situation with a tremendous upsurge for the democratic reconstruction of society along socialist lines, we might be far past this point. But we are not there, and we have to see where we really are, and where radical politics can be. Thus we submit that in the South today, and in the very nature of things, a mass infusion of the Democratic party by the Negro people, breaching the walls of segregation, would be a "fresh kind of political association," and is, in fact, a "bold approach."

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III

In terms of traditional coalition politics, majority rule in so diverse a nation as ours is bound to be moderate in nature. No majority party can base itself upon the programs of an extremist group that may exist in the party's ranks. To do so automatically antagonizes and repels the "middle group" which normally holds the balance of power. The penalty is frequently "standpattism" and immobility in the major parties. Hence, the evolution of these parties toward change is invariably accompanied by tremendous internal clashes such as we have been witnessing in the ranks of both national parties. The balancing middle is being displaced; this causes great disturbances, and a new balance must be found—either further to the left or the right.

This is precisely the point at which we—Socialists—can intervene to create a new sense of majority: a middle shifted to the left. There is at hand a ready reservoir of radical response. In the discontent of young people, above all in the sweeping impact of the civil rights movement, are resources of radical change. But if disaffection can express itself in protest, in shaking up the body politic, in dislocating the machinery of social repression, the challenge remains of turning that impulse to purposeful direction.

In the article cited above, Bayard Rustin adds:

> It may be premature to predict a Southern Democratic party of Negroes and white moderates and a Republican party of refugee racists and economic conservatives, but there certainly is a strong tendency toward realignment and an additional 3.6 million Negroes of voting age in the eleven Southern states are still to be heard from . . . [And later.] We must see to it that the reorganization of the "consensus party" proceeds along lines which will make it an effective vehicle for social reconstruction.

Suppose we restate that to clarify what we mean by coalition politics: In order to move our society forward, today in the 1960s (not the 70s or 80s which may present other problems or opportunities), we envisage a coalition of social forces and movements whose ideas and interests have a common purpose, and which will express itself through the political instrument that is most accessible and effective. A coalition animated by radical impulses and wishing to express itself forcefully will probably do so, in the main, through the Democratic party. Special and local conditions may create special institutions and local alignments of a different kind.* But, in general, for those who

* Thus, in New York's recent mayoralty campaign a good case might have been made for supporting Republican John Lindsay—but that was outside the stream of basic political trends or significance.

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seek social change, the Democratic party is already the major political arena and vehicle. The decisive elements of radical coalition are already in that party, or near it. The question, then, is not whether you or we join that party, but whether we recognize it as an instrument through use of which social welfare can be extended.

We are, in effect, speaking of two things. One is a party, and it exists; it represents in the turbulence of our national life a vehicle somewhat responsive to "extremist" pressures. The other, the coalition we advocate, is a vague but inspired, coming-together of movements and motivations which here act in concert, there severally press for different measures and conceptions of social betterment.

Asked why he robbed banks, Willie Sutton is supposed to have answered, "Because that's where the money is." In the same sense, we hold that the main arena in which a radical coalition can work politically is the Democratic party. That's where the people are—those most likely to respond to the influences of radical coalition. We are not suggesting that we commit ourselves in any principled or irrevocable way to the Democratic party. It is simply a matter of where the forces are and are likely to remain. In any case, there is no evidence that efforts in the near future to create new parties on a national scale can lead to anything but a splinter.

As this is written, we are witnessing the monstrous intervention in Santo Domingo and the terror of escalated war in Vietnam. Work in and through the party responsible for these acts? It would be foolish to say that protest should be confined to the Democratic party: there are times when it is necessary to take to the streets. But given the Congressional disquiet on Vietnam, it would be equally foolish to deny that protest within the Democratic party can be significant.

Democracy is finally not compatible with social advances at home and abuses abroad. But paradoxes are no less common in democracies than in other systems, perhaps more common in the nature of things. Acts of generosity and acts of cruelty are common in our history. The point is that democratic remedies exist, and it is our history.

The "consensus" party has, at least, been frayed on the issue. But that alone is not decisive. What is decisive is that we possess the freedoms of protest and opposition. What it comes down to is if the government (yes, the Democratic party) sees the conflict with Communism principally in military terms, it is up to us to offer political alternatives and sane peace-making policies. If the President contradicts democratic posture with military adventure, it is up to us to advance the politically radical and democratic means of opposing Communism.

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IV

Nothing is the same today as it was, let us say, twenty or thirty years ago. The New Deal, certainly in its later stages, initiated reforms in the South, as in other areas of the country, without damaging its racist structure except in the very general way that economic advance erodes the foundations of racism. TVA may have been accomplished in cooperation with the racist one-party structure of the South, yet this in no way diminishes the necessity to protect it from the assaults of private utility interests. Truman had to beat the Dixiecrats. And the New Frontier and the Great Society have had to sponsor legislative blows at racism.

Legislation has to be implemented by enforcement and education. Meanwhile we have to distinguish between what we have lost and what we have won, and that means learning to recognize what we have won, however small it is. Inadequate as much of the legislation has come to seem, the very perception of its inadequacy rests upon the advances which it embodies. It is downright silly to maintain that nothing has been achieved. Who will tell that to an auto worker who remembers the Ford plant thirty years ago? Or Mrs. Parks? ("When Mrs. Parks sat down, the whole world stood up," says the song. Didn't it!). And what purpose is served? Movements are not really built on failure!

We cannot afford to give the impression that we are dedicated to nonachievement in any respect. There are restive thousands, tens of thousands, who are preoccupied with social dislocation. For some of these the radical function too often stops at a criticism of all that is tasteless and shoddy in a society of meager values. However, there are millions who do not see beyond the "American way of life," and who can yet be attracted to a vision of a society that is good (not "Great"), a society that breathes freely for being open and vigorous.

To reach these millions, the people, requires political ruggedness, the intelligence of responsibility, and a strong commitment to democratic achievement. It is not the same as yielding to their prejudices, or shortsightedness; nor does it preclude the necessity to stand against as well as with, where there is no moral alternative. We have to stand with the "mass," to share and understand its present aspirations, if we are to refine its hopes. The pseudoradical notion that everyone is adjusted, that everyone but the poorest of the poor can be bought, is self-defeating, repugnant to any conception of social change. We believe vast numbers of human beings can be moved; otherwise all bets are really off!

We cannot turn our backs on society, or its components, and hope

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to revolutionize that society. Individuals can opt out, but the choice is not likely to win many recruits. Because of disgust with the rottenness that exists in such abundance, some peculiar attitudes have developed among us. It is as though goaded by frustration, and despairing before the immensity of the task, some of us have come to revel in the passion of misery. So it had better be said bluntly: There is no disgrace attached to a worker wanting to live better, wanting to be "fat," and no advantage in pseudo-asceticsm.

What is the Negro to strive for—if not to live better, to enjoy the fruits as well as the dignity of equality? The Black Muslims reflect the despair of the Negro, the hatreds and cruelties of a white society. No matter how many the adherents to Islam, the fact remains that the Negro masses want to be part of and to improve this society—to work in the factory beside the white worker and on the same terms, to be in the schools, churches, unions, neighborhoods, and political institutions. And we had best be there too—for this is where the radical potential in coalition resides.

There is no socialism without compassion for the socially injured and deprived. A socialist who does not feel it in his guts, whose commitment is entirely cerebral, is less than nothing. But a socialist who fails to recognize that he holds no proprietary right on compassion is no more than an impediment. No one will, or should, take us seriously if, in pursuing the ends of social and economic justice, we ignore the allies and issues which lift us toward that goal. We believe that the issues being fought out within the welfare state are real, even if distorted and insufficient; they are not just a shadow-play of manipulation or mass society. These issues affect the lives of millions of human beings: It matters a great deal whether an auto worker gets a better pension, and it even matters a little whether he gets our support.

Dissent is a function of conscience in any society. It contains, however, a corollary obligation to locate areas of "assent" in the movements of persons and politics. So we "assent" to the new social vigor of the churches. So we "assent" to the Civil Rights Act while continuing to dissent from its limitations and the realities of segregation. And so we "assent" to extensions of democratic system and procedure.

V

Are we suggesting that the matter ends here, with a new kind of coalition politics, embracing civil rights groups, labor, miscellaneous forces driven to social reform, and primarily expressing itself through the Democratic party? By no means.

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Coalition does not imply a suspension of the socialist function. It rather intensifies its opportunities. Whether in criticism or analysis, in our periodicals or our forums, we start with the premise of socialist conviction.

We are not offering the preposterous proposition that the Democratic party can be converted into a socialist party by some alchemy of penetration and guile. We do offer the proposition that a radical political coalition can exist within the Democratic party, and influence it toward advancing the national interest in social reconstruction.

As armies march best on full bellies, so progress encourages new horizons. The dispossessed have only small goals. Once the pangs of hunger are stilled, the appetite is not really dulled; it is refined. Here is the root of common cause between black and white worker, between unorganized and unionized, between social do-gooder and social revolutionary. In this, as in so many ways, the civil rights movement is serving to put us on the right track, particularly as it turns toward political action and a broadening of its demands.

Socialism is not merely an exercise in discontent. It is an affirmation of what is possible to man unfettered by economic or political repression. And an obligation to try to do something now.

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Tom Hayden

THE POLITICS OF "THE MOVEMENT"

My own disenchantment with American society was not caused by its racial bigotry, its warlike posturing, its supreme respect for money. All these might be understood as irrationalities which could be struck from the national character if only rational men were mobilized more effectively. But when events prove this assumption false, then disenchantment really begins: with the understanding that the most respected and enlightened Americans are among the most barbarous.

Take just two examples. There is a conventional notion that the Southern racial crisis is caused and prolonged by "white trash"—an isolated and declining remnant in our society. We are told that rational men are attempting, within the framework of due process, to educate these minority elements to a more progressive social outlook. But this picture is shattered every day by events in the Black Belt. There the murderers of civil rights workers again and again include men like Byron De la Beckwith, the respected downtown businessman who shot Medgar Evers in the back. They are middle class and enjoy the broad support of their local communities.

When this is pointed out, of course, we are told that respectable men are murderers only in places like Mississippi. By national standards, the Black Belt killers are not respectable. But is Mississippi an isolated part of America? If not, who at the national level is responsible for the state of terror in Mississippi? Part of the answer, I am afraid, is that leading Northerners buttress the Southern status quo. Without dozens of companies owned from the North, plus the billions provided by defense contracts and agricultural subsidies, Mississippi could not have survived the postwar period as a racist state. Mississippi Power and Light, for example, many of whose personnel are connected with the White Citizens Council, is owned and controlled by the same men who play leading roles in another corporation known for its enlightenment, Harvard University.

A second example: we are told that the United States is on the side of the new nations and the exploited and impoverished peoples

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of the third world. But, once again, the facts have nothing to do with this happy picture—as the affairs of an American businessman like Charles Engelhard of New Jersey suggest. In his mid-forties, Engelhard is already renowned in business circles and has become an important political figure in the liberal wing of the Democratic party. He was sent by the President to represent the U.S. at occasions as vital as the celebration of Algerian independence. He was a friend of John F. Kennedy; Lyndon Johnson praises him as a "great humanitarian." How did he become so famous? Presumably because he owns the controlling shares in the mines of the Republic of South Africa. But aren't those mines a blasphemy against the values of the Free World? And is Engelhard an isolated and unrespectable member of that world?

This is civilized barbarism—pernicious, sophisticated, subtly concealed from public view, massively protected from political attack. The barbaric America is invisible to the majority of its people, who are lodged in occupations and social positions which form a desensitizing trap. They are at the bottom, or in the middle, of organizations whose official purposes are justified in abstract terms. Their views, inherited from their families or implanted by the school system, and fed every day by the mass media, permit them to screen out threatening information or alternative ways of seeing the world.

The usual way to "escape" the trapped condition of ordinary Americans is to ascend to higher levels of influence and knowledge in some key institution. But while an overview of society is gained from these positions, a new trap is waiting. For entry into higher organizational circles depends upon accepting their general design and purpose. This means that people in "responsible" positions are most often blind to immoral consequences of their work. Their blindness is intensified by the belief that they are close to people's problems and that administrative remedies exist for whatever arises. This is the usual attitude among public servants, from police to administrators of the war-on-poverty.

II

This national trance depends upon one crucial assumption: that American society is being improved domestically. The legitimacy gained by the industrial unions, the liberal welfare legislation which was passed in the thirties and forties, and now the civil rights and anti-poverty reforms of the sixties—these are seen as part of a long sweep toward a society of economic and social justice. But there is, in fact, little evidence to justify the view that the social reforms of the past thirty

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years actually improved the quality of American life in a lasting way. And there is much evidence which suggests that the reforms gained were illusory or token, serving chiefly to sharpen the capacity of the system for manipulation and oppression.

Look closely for a moment at the social legislation upon which the notion of domestic improvement is based. The Wagner Act was supposed to effect unionization of workers; but today the unionized labor force is shrinking with the automation of the mass-production industries, and millions of other workers, never organized, are without any protection. The social security laws were supposed to support people in distress, but today many are still not covered, and those with coverage can barely make ends meet. Unemployment compensation policies were supposed to aid men in need of jobs, but today many are still without coverage, while benefits represent a smaller and smaller share of the cost of living. The 1946 Full Employment Act was supposed to guarantee federal action to provide a job for every American who needed one, but today the official (understated) unemployment rate is close to six per cent. The 1949 Public Housing Act, sponsored by conservative Robert Taft, was to create 800,000 low-cost units by 1953, but today less than half that number are constructed, many of them beyond reach of the poor. The difficult struggle to enact even a token policy of public medical care, the hollow support for public education, the stagnation and starvation of broader programs for health, recreation and simple city services—all this is evidence for a simple truth. *the welfare state is a myth.*

Seen in the context of a history of unkept promises, the 1965 anti-poverty program should evoke no optimism. The amount of money allocated is a pittance; most of it is going to local politicians, school boards, welfare agencies, housing authorities, professional personnel, and even to the police; its main thrust is to shore up sagging organizational machinery, not to shift the distribution of income and influence in the direction of the poor. Some of the more sophisticated liberals understand that the "involvement of the poor" is essential to an effective program, but this is seen in capitalist-psychological terms, stressing the need to "repair" the defeatist self-image which supposedly excludes the poor from sharing in the enterprise system. A few people, including members of the Administration, see "involvement" in political terms as well. But this participation is frustrated by the poverty planners' undeviating allegiance to existing power centers. In reality, then, the poor only *flavor* the program. A few are co-opted into it, but only as atomized

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individuals. They do not have independent organizational strength, as do the machines and social agencies.

But the quality of the welfare state is best illustrated by the sluggish way in which it responds to pressure for civil rights reform. It required the slaughter of little girls, a near bloodbath in Birmingham, violence toward Northern whites, students and ministers, an outbreak of riots across the North, and the organization of an independent political party in Mississippi before the Administration began to move on the civil rights front. And that motion gives little hope of real progress. Indeed, the present (1965) voting rights bill actually shrinks the existing powers of the Federal government (as established in such codes as Section 242, Title 18, which provides for criminal prosecution of people acting under cover of law to violate others' constitutional rights). It leaves the decision to take action to the Attorney General; it involves complicated and time-consuming procedures for local Negroes; it provides no protection against intimidation for civil rights workers or local people.

In all these areas, from the Wagner Act to the newest civil rights legislation, my criticism has been narrowed to the question: did the legislation achieve, or does it offer some hope of achieving, its stated purposes? The tragedy, however, is not simply that these programs fall short of their goals. Rather, the goals themselves are far from desirable to anyone interested in greater democracy and a richer quality of social life. Welfare and public housing policies, for instance, are creating a new and public kind of authoritarianism. Public relief clients and tenants, lacking any protective organizations, are subject to the caprice and cruelty of supervisors, investigators, and local machine politicians. Similarly, labor and civil rights legislation creates tools for government intervention at moments of sharp social conflict, without really changing the tyrannical conditions in which millions of workers and Negroes live. The full employment and anti-poverty acts, along with the relief measures of the thirties, give the government power to cushion the economic situation just short of the point of mass unemployment. Programs such as urban renewal serve as the major domestic outlet for investment capital and, consciously or not, as a means of demoralizing and politically fragmenting the poor. The national government thus becomes the chief force for stabilizing the private economy and for managing social crisis. Its interests, institutions and personnel have merged with those of high finance and industry.

The traditional Left expectation of irreconcilable and clashing class

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interests has been defied. Still assuming such antagonism, however, many Leftists tend to view each piece of social legislation as a victory which strengthens the "progressive" forces. They see a step-by-step transformation of society as the result of pushing for one "politically acceptable" reform after another. But it appears that the American elite has discovered a long-term way to stabilize or cushion the contradictions of our society. It does this through numerous forms of state intervention, the use of our abundant capacity for material gratification, and the ability to condition nearly all the information which people receive. And if this is the case, then more changes of the New Deal variety will not be "progressive" at all. Except for temporarily boosting income for a few people, this entire reformist trend has weakened the poor under the pretense of helping them and strengthened elite rule under the slogan of curbing private enterprise. In fostering a "responsible" Negro and labor leadership and bringing it into the pseudopluralist system of bargaining and rewards, a way has been found to contain and paralyze the disadvantaged and voiceless people.

III

Why have liberal strategies failed to secure substantial reforms over the last three decades? The answer can only be grasped by looking at the general organizing concepts of American liberal and labor leaders. These begin with the view that the American masses are "apathetic" and can only be roused because of simple material needs or during short periods of great enthusiasm. The masses most likely to move, it is said, are those who have gained something already: the unionized workers, registered voters, property owners. Those less likely to move are the people on the absolute bottom with nothing to lose, for they are too damaged to be the real motor of change.

From this rough description of the masses, liberals go on to argue the need for certain sorts of organizations. The masses need skilled and responsible leaders, they insist. It is best if these leaders have rank-and-file experience and operate within a formally democratic system. But this grass-roots flavor must not obscure the necessity for leaders to lead, that is, put forward a program, a set of answers that guides the movement. And because they monopolize leadership experience, it soon appears to these leaders that they alone are qualified to maintain the organization.

The perilous position of the movement, due to attacks from centralized business and political forces, adds a further incentive for a top-down system of command. The need for alliances with other groups,

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created in large part through the trust which sets of leaders develop for each other, also intensifies the trend toward vertical organization. Finally, the leaders see a need to screen out anyone with "Communist-oriented" views, since such individuals are presumably too skilled to be allowed to operate freely within the movement. Slowly an elite is formed, calling itself the liberal-labor community. It treats the rank-and-file as a mass to be molded; sometimes thrust forward into action, sometimes held back. A self-fulfilling pattern emerges: because the nature of the organization is elitist, many people react to it with disinterest or suspicion, giving the leadership the evidence it needs to call the masses apathetic.

The pressures which influence these leaders come, not primarily from below, but from the top, from the most powerful men in the country. Sometimes bluntly and sometimes subtly, the real elite grooms responsible trade union and civil rights leaders. The leaders' existence comes to depend upon the possibility of receiving attention from the President or some top aide, and they judge organizational issues with an eye on this possibility. There is usually no question about the leaders' primary loyalty to the "national interest" as defined by the Administration, even though they always believe their judgments are independently made. Thus most of the civil rights leadership in 1964, fearing the Goldwater movement and hoping for civil rights legislation from a victorious Johnson Administration, called for a "moratorium" on mass demonstrations. The labor leadership performed the same function for the same reasons during World War II; the irony is that their critics in that period included A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin, two Negroes who pushed for the 1964 moratorium.

A recent incident clarified the political role of this leadership and pointed towards the possibility of an alternative strategy. This was the challenge posed by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic party and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee at the 1964 Democratic National Convention.

Members of the FDP trooped into Atlantic City to argue for their rightful control of the Mississippi Democratic seats. They found substantial support from rank-and-file members of Northern delegations who favored their modest demand for at least equal treatment with the racist party at the convention. Here was a chance, it was thought, to end Southern obstruction of the Johnson Administration's program. But then the Democratic leadership let its position be known: the FDP was morally sound, but "illegal" and "not qualified." Support

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within the delegations wavered. The FDP's last chance for success depended on rallying national liberal-labor leaders to support its demand for a floor debate, in front of the television cameras. But some Negro leaders worked against the Mississippi party, others took a vacillating position and no one would stand firmly with them. To do so, the leaders claimed, would jeopardize Humphrey's chance at the vice-presidency, strengthen Goldwater's hand, and split the FDP from its "allies" in the liberal-labor world. The FDP members decided that the fate of Humphrey and Goldwater depended in fact upon the same power structure that was determining their own fate. Not wanting the kind of "allies" and "victories" being offered, they went home. Their real allies were the poor people waiting in the Delta; and their real victory was in being able to maintain fidelity to those allies. This was a victory because it kept the movement alive and gave its members some real understanding of what was needed to change the national situation.

IV

The Mississippi Convention challenge points towards a new kind of politics and a new kind of organizing, which has at least an outside chance of truly changing American society. This stirring we call the Movement.

The Movement tries to oppose American barbarism with new structures and opposing identities. These are created by people whose need to understand their society and govern their own existence has somehow not been cancelled out by the psychological damage they have received. For different reasons such needs survive among the poor, among students and other young people, and finally among millions of other Americans not easily grouped except by their modest individual resistance to the system's inhumanity. It is from these ranks that the Movement is being created. What kind of people, more exactly, are they, and what kind of organizational strategy might they develop?

1. *An Interracial Movement of the Poor.*

The Mississippi sharecroppers are the most visible and inspiring representations of an awakening that is taking place among the poor in America. Their perspective centers on Negro freedom, of course, but they are committed deeply to the idea of a movement of all the powerless and exploited. In certain ways theirs is a radicalism unique because of Black Belt conditions. Their strength comes from a stable system of family life and work. Politics is new and fresh for them; they have not experienced

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the hollow promises of an opportunistic liberal-Negro machine. Their opposition's naked brutality keeps them constantly in a crisis framework. The broadening of their movement into Arkansas, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, the Carolinas and Virginia, already underway, can be expected to challenge fundamentally the national coalition directing the Democratic party. Already the Democrats are trying to groom moderate and liberal politicians to provide an "alternative" to the segregationists and the independent FDP. Probably this effort will succeed, in the sense that political moderates will begin to compete for electoral power and leadership of the civil rights forces, mostly basing their strength in the cities, among privileged Negroes. The FDP, as a structure, may be absorbed into the national party, if only because it has no other, more effective place to go. But since the new Southern power structure will not solve the problems of poverty and race which have plagued the North for generations, there is very little chance that this movement of poor people will be entirely co-opted or crushed.

In the black ghettoes of the North, the Movement faces heavier obstacles. There work is often deadening, family life distorted: "proper" political channels are sewers; people are used to, and tired of, party organizers exploiting them. The civil rights movement does not touch these hundreds of ghettoes in any significant way because of the middle class nature of its program and leadership. However, the Harlem rent strikes and the activities of Malcolm X are clear evidence that there are in the ghettoes people prepared to take action. Some of them are of Southern background; some are housewives with wasted talents; some are youth with no future for their energy; some are junkies and numbers men with little loyalty to their particular game. Different as the forms of their discontent may be, the discontent itself is general to the ghetto and can be the spring for action. Under present conditions, political movements among these people are likely to be based on a race consciousness which is genuine and militant—and which is also vital because of the failure of whites to act in favor of equal rights. The ghetto race consciousness, however, is intertwined with the consciousness of being both poor and powerless. Almost of necessity, the demands that the ghetto poor put forward are also in the interest of the white poor, as well as of middle class professionals who depend on the expansion of the public sectors of the economy.

But will white working class and poor people take up these issues, which the "Negro problem" by its nature tends to raise? The negative evidence is plentiful. Poor whites, such as those in parts of the South

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who are truly irrelevant to the modern economy, tend to see their plight (sometimes with accuracy) as personal rather than social: a function of sickness, bad luck, or psychological disorder. Poverty is not seen clearly as the fate of a whole interracial class, but only as the fate of individuals, each shamed into self-blame by their Protestant ideology. Working class whites, on the other hand, are more likely to be conscious of their problems as a group, but they tend to defend their scarce privileges—jobs, wages, education for their children—against what they see as the onslaught of Negro competition. While "backlash" did not split the alliance of white working people with the Democratic party in 1964, it does serve as a barrier to an alliance with the Negro poor. But it is foolish to be rigid about these notions. Whites *are* being organized, on a mass basis, in areas of Appalachia where there exists a common culture and an industrial union tradition, and where the blame for misery can be laid to the coal operators, the conservative United Mine Workers, and the government. They also have been organized in Cleveland, where they face the "welfare situation" together.

But these organizing efforts were led by local people or independent organizers outside the structure of the labor movement. Today there are millions of workers trapped by the organizational framework of the AFL-CIO. Their unrest at times moves the international unions slightly, but the internationals are more dependent on government and business than on their own members, and, in addition, they seem to possess effective techniques for curbing shop revolts. It is not simply the "better objective conditions" which split the white from the Negro poor, but the existence of trade unions which actively distort the better aspirations of their members. Economic and social conditions, of course, are not improving and workers discontent is evidenced by the recent wave of rank-and-file revolts. But whether this discontent spurs a coalition of poor whites with Negroes depends, most of all, on whether a way can be found to organize workers independent of AFL-CIO routines. Concretely, that means democratic control by the workers of their union locals, and the entry of those locals into political activities and coalitions on the community level. It also means community action and organization among the millions of low-paid workers presently outside the labor movement.

The crucial importance of community work can only be grasped if one understands the sorts of ideas the American poor have about themselves. They operate with a kind of split consciousness. On the one hand, poor people know they are victimized from every direction. The facts of life always break through to expose the distance between

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American ideals and personal realities. This kind of knowledge, however, is kept undeveloped and unused because of another knowledge imposed on the poor, a keen sense of dependence on the oppressor. This is the source of that universal fear which leads poor people to act and even to think subserviently. Seeing themselves to blame for their situation, they rule out the possibility that they might be qualified to govern themselves and their own organizations. Besides fear, it is their sense of inadequacy and embarrassment which destroys the possibility of revolt. At the same time, this set of contradictory feelings results in indirect forms of protest all the time: styles of dress and language, withdrawal from political life, defiance of the boss's or the welfare worker's rules and regulations.

There can be no poor people's movement in any form unless the poor can overcome their fear and embarrassment. I think the release comes from a certain kind of organizing which tries to make people understand their own worth and dignity. This work depends on the existence of "material issues" as a talking and organizing point—high rents, voting rights, unpaved roads, and so on—but it moves from there into the ways such issues are related to personal life. The organizer spends hours and hours in the community, listening to people, drawing out their own ideas, rejecting their tendency to depend on him for solutions. Meetings are organized at which people with no "connections" can be given a chance to talk and work out problems together—usually for the first time. All this means fostering in everyone that sense of decision-making power which American society works to destroy. Only in this way can a movement be built which the Establishment can neither buy off nor manage, a movement too vital ever to become a small clique of spokesmen.

An organizational form that suggests the style of such a movement is the "community union," involving working-class and poor people in local insurgency. Open and democratic, the community union offers a real alternative to the kind of participation permitted in civil rights groups, trade unions and Democratic party machines. It might take a variety of forms: block clubs, housing committees, youth groups, etc. The union's insistence on the relevance of "little people," as well as its position outside and against the normal channels, would create a rooted sense of independence among the members.

The problem of politics among the poor is severe. In the first place, their potential electoral power is low because of their location in gerrymandered political districts, their rapid movement from house to house, and the complicated and discriminatory electoral procedures in many

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cities. Beyond these problems lies the obvious and well-grounded cynicism of the poor about elections. Given all these conditions, it is barely conceivable that a poor person could be elected to an important political office. Even were this possible, it would be on a token basis, and the elected official would be under strong pressure to conform to the rules of the game. Thus, the orthodox idea of politics is contradictory to building a movement. The movement needs to discover a politics of its own. This might be done by electing people who will see their office as a community organizing tool, letting community people participate directly in decisions about how the office should be used. This experiment is being made in Atlanta where a SNCC field secretary, Julian Bond, was elected in June 1965 to the State Legislature. Or what might be done is to contest the basic class and racial injustices of American politics, demanding that poverty areas be granted political representation, or running freedom elections to dramatize the lack of representation for the boxed-in poor. This sort of thing would probably mobilize more poor people than orthodox electoral activity. The mobilization would be "practical" from the standpoint of getting modest reforms; more important, it would point toward the need to rearrange American political institutions to fit the needs of excluded people.

2. *A Student Movement.*

If poor people are in the movement because they have nothing to gain in the status system, students are in it because, in a sense, they have gained too much. Most of the active student radicals today come from middle to upper-middle class professional homes. They were born with status and affluence as facts of life, not goals to be striven for. In their upbringing, their parents stressed the right of children to question and make judgments, producing perhaps the first generation of young people both affluent and independent of mind. And then these students so often encountered social institutions that denied them their independence and betrayed the democratic ideals they were taught. They saw that men of learning were careerists; that school administrators and ministers almost never discussed the realities the students lived with; that even their parents were not true to the ideals they taught the young.

It was against this background that young people became concerned about war, racism and inequality in the early sixties. By now, the empty nature of existing vocational alternatives has pushed several hundreds of these students into community organizing. Working in poor communities is a concrete task in which the split between job and values can be healed. It is also a position from which to expose the whole

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structure of pretense, status and glitter that masks the country's real human problems. And, finally, it is a way to find people who want to change the country, and possibly can do so.

When a student comes into a community, there are countless obstacles in his way. He is an outsider, he is over-educated, he has nothing concrete to offer people, and often, he is white in a Negro ghetto. At the same time, however, he brings something with him: the very presence of students suggests to the poor that their more activist notions may be right after all. The student alone can say, "Look, I come from the world that says you are not qualified, and I know that is a lie. I come to you because you can teach me as much as I can teach you." Students can also make the poverty problem visible and threatening because they create resources previously unimaginable. Parents and universities become energized; money can be raised; contacts can be set up with other people's organizations around the country. Finally, students and poor people make each other feel real. What has flowed from this connection is most of the vitality of the civil rights and anti-poverty movements over the past five years.

Now it appears that students are finding ways to organize effectively around other problems too: university reform and peace. The Berkeley "uprising" and the April March of 20,000 against the war in Vietnam were major departures from the inconsequential student politics of the old days. On many campuses students are beginning to form unions of their own, as well as independent seminars pointed toward the eventual organization of a "free university." In addition, they are beginning to mobilize community action against the Vietnamese war—thereby encountering their friends already at work among the poor. These efforts may thread the several protest movements in the country into a grass-roots coalition.

3. *Middle-class insurgents.*

A centralized and commercial society wastes the talents and energies of millions of individuals. Some of these are women who are excluded from male-dominated vocations. Some are people with human values who cannot assert them effectively within organizations attached to the cold war consensus. Some were politically active in the thirties, but faded away when popular movements declined. Some are part of the postwar generation which missed the experience of a radical movement altogether, and who are lodged uncomfortably in publishing houses, universities, and labor bureaucracies.

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The new movements are opening great possibilities for participation by such middle class people. Their activity often includes vital financial support, but it can and does go farther. Insurgency within American institutions is spreading: professors fighting their administrations, lawyers against the bar association, welfare workers against the political machine, muckrakers against the press establishments. This insurgency is bound to increase as the new generation of student activists graduates into the professions. And it is an insurgency which needs a movement of poor people, insistently demanding new social purposes from the professionals.

To summarize: the Movement is a community of insurgents sharing the same radical values and identity, seeking an independent base of power wherever they are. It aims at a transformation of society led by the most excluded and "unqualified" people. Primarily, this means building institutions outside the established order which seek to become the genuine institutions of the total society. Community unions, freedom schools, experimental universities, community-formed police review boards, people's own anti-poverty organizations fighting for federal money, independent union locals—all can be "practical" pressure points from which to launch reform in the conventional institutions while at the same time maintaining a separate base and pointing towards a new system. Ultimately, this movement might lead to a Continental Congress called by all the people who feel excluded from the higher circles of decision-making in the country. This Congress might even become a kind of second government, receiving taxes from its supporters, establishing contact with other nations, holding debates on American foreign and domestic policy, dramatizing the plight of all groups that suffer from the American system.

If it is hard to imagine this kind of revolutionary process in the United States, it might be because no previous model of revolution seems appropriate to this most bloated and flexible of the advanced societies. There may be no way to change this country. At least there is no way we can bank on. Both technological change and social reform seem to rationalize the power of the system to drain the heart of protest. The Movement at least suggests that we bank on our own consciousness, what there is of our own humanity, and begin to work.

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Max Hayward

THE CASE OF TERTZ-SINYAVSKI

Last October Western correspondents reported from Moscow that two Soviet writers, Andrei Sinyavski and Yuli Daniel, had been arrested and that they would be charged under article 70 of the Soviet Criminal Code with "dissemination of anti-Soviet propaganda." Most of the reports suggested, more specifically, that the two men had been arrested for publishing their manuscripts abroad under the pseudonyms "Abram Tertz" and "Nikolai Arzhak." On November 11 Jerzy Giedroyc, the editor of the Polish emigre magazine *Kultura,* retracted an earlier denial and stated that the two arrested writers were indeed none other than Tertz and Arzhak, whose manuscripts have been published at regular intervals in *Kultura* since 1959. This statement must be accepted as authoritative, though it has not yet been confirmed by any official Soviet source.

Andrei Sinyavski and Yuli Daniel both belong to the generation of Soviet intellectuals who went through the war and came back to do their university studies in the immediate postwar years, when the life of the country was dominated by an atmosphere of total terror. The creative forces among the intelligentsia could do nothing but lie low, cowed and submissive to the eyes of the outside observer, but often struggling invisibly and heroically to maintain their integrity in unimaginable conditions. Their only possible mode of protest was silence, and their symbol was Boris Pasternak. In recent years this generation has come into its own, and played a leading role in articulating the humanistic values which have often found open expression in the pages of such journals as *Novy Mir,* where Sinyavski has published some of his penetrating articles and book reviews and Daniel his translations of poets writing in other Slav languages (e.g. the leading young Ukrainian poet Ivan Drach and the Czech, František Hrubin).

After taking his Doctor's degree at Moscow University some time in the late forties—his dissertation was on Maxim Gorki's long unfinished novel *Klim Samgin*—Sinyavski has combined a career of research and

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teaching at the Gorki Institute of World Literature in Moscow with the writing of literary essays and book reviews which are remarkable for the originality of his literary insights, the incisiveness of his style and the calm courage with which he speaks his mind. He is also co-author of a study of Picasso—the first attempt at a sympathetic presentation of the principles of modern art to the Soviet public—and of a major study of early Soviet poetry.

For many Russians his name is now linked with that of Pasternak, since it is he who wrote the long and scholarly introduction to an important edition of Pasternak's poetry which was recently published in Moscow—evidently after many delays and battles over what could or could not be included. This volume is a great step forward (even though it does not include such a key poem as *Hamlet* from the Zhivago cycle) over the very parsimonious selection which appeared in 1961. Sinyavski first made his mark as a critic by reviewing the latter volume for *Novy Mir* in March 1962. He pointed out then that the selection was biased and unrepresentative and that individual poems had been censored: "a number of memorable verses are missing, others have been changed, in some poems the ending is missing." In the recent edition, perhaps in some measure due to Sinyavski's efforts, much of this damage has been repaired, so that, for example, the opening stanzas of Pasternak's famous poem about Blok, discreetly replaced by asterisks in the 1961 edition, have now been made available in full to Russian readers. The first of these stanzas is:

> Only the influential yes-men know
> Whom critics are to propagate
> With praise, or criticize
> And liquidate.
> (translated by Manya Harari)

Sinyavski's interpretation of Pasternak, as expounded first in his 1962 article and at greater length in his introduction to the 1965 edition, is probably the most sophisticated to have appeared so far in any language. Both essays illuminate Pasternak's difficult poetry for the reader with unequalled scholarship and critical sensitivity. He shows us how Pasternak sought profound, though unobtrusive, poetic sermons in humble everyday activity, the humdrum and the commonplace, in nature and in all other things taken for granted by man in the heat of his "historical" pursuits. It is interesting to note that Sinyavski found that Pasternak was in many ways a kindred spirit to the late Robert Frost, on whom he wrote a perceptive essay in *Novy Mir* for January, 1964.

Sinyavski has outraged the "influential yes-men" who still control

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Russia's literary establishment, not only by his subtle advocacy of Pasternakian values, but also by occasionally taking issue with them. For example, he reviewed in the December 1964, issue of *Novy Mir,* an almost unbelievably scurrilous novel (*The Blight* by Ivan Shevtsov) lampooning Soviet artists in the spirit of Khruschev's notorious outburst during his visit to an art exhibition in Moscow in 1962. The novel, which appeared somewhat belatedly around the time of Khrushchev's fall in November 1963, was intended to whip up popular feeling against Soviet artists who had deviated from "Socialist Realism." At first sight Sinyavski's review of this particularly grotesque neo-Stalinist fantasy appeared to be just another blow in the running fight that has now been going on for several years between the "liberals" and "conservatives" (or whatever one chooses to call them) in the Soviet press. This factional struggle has been legitimized by the "cultural" powers-that-be and, apart from the brief interlude at the end of 1962 and the beginning of 1963 when Khruschev temporarily upset the balance between the two sides, the polemic has gone on as monotonously as a ping-pong match. The "liberals" have hitherto played the game by advancing rational arguments. In his review of Shevtsov's novel Sinyavski implied that the "liberals" are in fact dealing with sick minds impervious to reason. He suggested that instead of polemizing with them, it would be better to exercise charity toward these people: "perhaps, rather than attack Ivan Shevtsov, it would be better to pity him, to sympathize with him . . ." In his latest published work, a review in *Novy Mir* for March this year of a collection of poetry by E. Dolmatovski, Sinyavski examines more in sorrow than in anger, the work of this representative of the conservative camp, and takes it as the starting point for a witty and enlightening disquisition on the nature of poetic mediocrity in general.

If Sinyavski is Abram Tertz, then the Soviet police have arrested not only one of Russia's leading literary critics, but also one of her most gifted prose writers; for Tertz is by common consent the most distinguished and interesting of the Soviet writers who in recent years have published their manuscripts abroad under pseudonyms. His long essay *On Socialist Realism,** his novels and short stories, such as *The Trial Begins, The Icicle* and *The Makepeace Experiment,* constitute the work of a writer who, though he has not perhaps yet reached his maturity, will stand comparison in respect of literary skill, accomplishment and originality with any other Soviet or Western writer.

To accuse him of being "anti-Soviet" is as irrelevant and superficial as it would be to say that Dosteovsky was anti-Russian or Faulkner

* First American publication in DISSENT, then issued as a book by Pantheon.

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anti-American. Tertz is firmly rooted in the realities of his own country, and draws on his experience of the specific features of Soviet life for the stuff out of which he fashions his extraordinary fantasies and allegories. He does not reject this life and reality with all its tragic complexity, but seeks to assimilate and interpret it in the light of his highly original artistic vision, thereby following the great Russian tradition of translating everyday life, even at its most sordid, commonplace, and tedious, into artistic terms. In this respect he differs from some other of the younger "new wave" Soviet writers (e.g., Tendryakov, Nagibin and Kazakov), who have been able to get their works published and officially accepted, only in preferring to their more straightforward realism what he himself describes as a "phantasmagoric" style owing more to Gogol and Dostoevsky than to Tolstoy and Chekhov. He feels that this is appropriate to the bizarre "realities" of our times.

Tertz's contemplation of human folly in its specifically Soviet setting has led him not to a Swiftian contempt for mankind as a whole but rather to a faith in the ultimate triumph of sanity and good will. In this, as in his extraordinary inventiveness as an observer of the fantastic, the absurd and the incongruous in human conduct, he is reminiscent of Karl Capek, who also tried to make the burden of historical catastrophe somewhat easier to bear by encouraging us to take the longer view which only humor or faith can bring.

So far—the situation may well have been clarified by the time this appears in print—there has been no mention of the arrest of Sinyavski and Daniel in the Soviet press, nor has there been any official indication of the nature of the charges to be brought against them. The fact of their arrest was, however, admitted by Alexei Surkov, the secretary general of the Union of Soviet Writers, at a press conference in Paris on November 22nd. In reply to questions Surkov said: "I am convinced that the investigation will be swift and that legality will be observed" (*Figaro,* November 24th). It is obviously difficult to judge a legality which shuns the light of day, but even if Surkov's optimistic view of it is justified, the detention and investigation (which has scarcely been "swift") of Sinyavski and Daniel are a disquieting reminder that the police, as well as the censors, are still formidable obstacles to the free development of Soviet literature.

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NOTEBOOK

Irving Howe

William Buckley and the Price of Kicks

I have never met William Buckley, and the only place I'd care to would be on a public platform, in debate. But for some time I've been hearing about his attractive qualities: he is charming, witty, literate, a cultivated man who happens to hold distasteful political ideas. So he has been described by certain intellectuals who should have known better but out of their boredom with the fuzziness of American politics and their desire for sharp confrontations of mind, allowed themselves to be taken in by Buckley's style.

The recent New York City elections should put an end to this nonsense. For the Buckley who emerged from this election was, in Mike Harrington's kindly words, "an urbane front man for the most primitive and vicious emotions in the land." This Buckley learned how easily a demagogue can inflame racist sentiments in his followers without having himself to use racist language. He learned how convenient it is to exploit the fantasies of lower-middle-class home-owners afraid that a Negro might move in next door. He learned how stirring it can be to excite the McCarthyite hooligans while himself maintaining the disdainful posture of the wealthy snob—for which the hooligans came to adore him, feeling that their social meanness had found sanction in his polysyllabic "class." ("Say something profound, Bill," cried one of Buckley's admirers at the pro-Vietnam war parade in New York, as if to plead: Justify our brawls in the eyes of Ernest van den Haag).

Buckley spoke the inside language of hatred: "I would go to Harlem to a place where garbage is regularly thrown out of the window and call a rally and ask the people to stop." How about calling a rally before the windows of landlords who regularly gouge these Harlem tenants and asking *them* to stop? It didn't, apparently, strike him as quite so urgent. He did feel obliged, however, to propose that people on relief be sent to "rehabilitation" camps outside the city: "there are many arguments," said Gentleman Bill, "for locating them *and their children* elsewhere" (emphasis added) —which might also dispose of all that stuff about integrating the schools. Drug addicts should be shipped out of the city. Where to? Darien, Connecticut? No. "It doesn't matter as long as nobody sees them. Outside the city, perhaps one of the largish islands."

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Surely this did not complete Buckley's list of deportees. Surely in a purified New York, where Rosemary Gunning could walk the streets without threat of leer or whistle, the "epicene slobs" protesting the Vietnam war (as Buckley, in all his bubbling charm, called them) would also have to be shipped away. Surely he could not bear the hordes of homosexuals assaulting our national virility: a "largish," a very "largish" island for them? And all the reds and pinks and pacifists fouling the streets: anywhere, "as long as nobody sees them?"

It's interesting to speculate as to why this elegant jackanapes took in certain people. Perhaps one reason is that we have no tradition in the U.S. of right-wing intellectuals. Think of the archetypal American reactionary and you summon an image of a stumbling primitive who wants the U.S. to quit the UN, drop the bomb, bust the unions, clean up the reds, abolish the income tax. But that someone wanting a good many of these same things could also write a paragraph of lucid prose and make a clever wisecrack was not really within the bounds of our experience. Had we reflected a little on European history, where cultivated intellectuals have always been ready to defend the politics of caste and greed, the appearance of the *National Review* would have seemed a commonplace event.

There is another, still more important reason for Buckley *succes d'estime* among some intellectuals. In the last two decades American intellectuals have tended increasingly to substitute judgments of taste for judgments of belief; they have responded to candidates more and more in terms of personal style, rather than of political content. This approach to politics seems to me quite unserious, a sign of decadence. And from this approach Buckley profited. He could become a kind of fearful, snapping pet, whose neatly-structured sentences gave weary liberals and worn radicals a tremor of *Schadenfreude*—with the tacit assumption that it didn't really matter what he or anyone said, since things would go along on their usual course.

The New York election should have

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proved how false this notion is. It should have proved that the price of kicks can come too high.

P.S.—Let me reinforce my point: The ground for criticizing President Johnson is not that he is corn-pone but that his foreign policy is rotten. If tomorrow he were to initiate serious steps toward peace in Vietnam, I would be ready to forgive his bad taste in exposing his incision.

Jan Howard

The Provocation of Violence: A Civil Rights Tactic?

The civil rights movement is pledged to nonviolence. It is commonly assumed by those of us involved in it that the provocation of violence is alien to its strategy and that violence is simply a calculated risk in trying to achieve its goals. But the facts compel me to question this assumption and to suggest that the provocation of violence is often used as a latent tactic.

This contention is difficult to prove. I am certain many of us working for civil rights are unconscious of the way we exploit violence. And since the whole ideology of the movement implies an abhorrence of violence, none of us wants to admit that violence is more than a calculated risk. In the South violence against civil rights workers often occurs spontaneously, without any attempt to invite it; so it is hard to know where provocation as risk leaves off and provocation as tactic begins.

Yet, the record suggests that in many situations the provocation of violence has become more than a calculated risk of the movement. It has the earmarks of a strategy.

Consider what happened in the 1964 Mississippi Summer Project. Its purposes were to register Negroes to vote; to teach them in Freedom Schools; and to expose white college students to the rigors of Southern poverty and repression. I understand still another goal was expressed by leaders of the project long before it actually began—getting federal troops to Mississippi to protect the voter registration drive. The fulfillment of this goal hinged on violence, and the leaders knew it. They also knew something else—that the government was reluctant to provide protection. For several years a seasoned cadre of Negro civil rights workers had been waging the voter registration drive under conditions of open brutality and terror. When they asked for federal protection, the government was uncooperative.

Leaders of the movement anticipated that bringing hundreds of outsiders to Mississippi would trigger violence, but this time the violence would be against

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students from white, affluent, influential families, and the federal government would be forced to protect them. The prophecy was largely correct. The project had only begun when three of the workers were murdered. This single act gave the program more publicity than any other kind of action could have. It did not bring federal troops, but it brought FBI agents and federal marshals in large numbers, and by their presence they reduced the likelihood of violence against the civil rights workers.*

The chain of events in this and similar situations forces us to consider this question: when is the provocation of violence more than a calculated risk of the movement? I suggest an answer: when the movement adopts a goal which it believes can be fulfilled only through violence. It is then, in effect, relying on violence to achieve some end. Violence is not simply a calculated risk; it is part of an over-all plan. And the instrumental value of violence is a built-in impetus for actions that will provide it.

Because the Summer Project had so many goals, one can always argue that the goal of getting federal troops had no special effect on the actions of the movement. It would have brought the students South anyway. This argument begs the question. With respect to achieving one goal, the provocation of violence can be merely a calculated risk; but with respect to achieving another, it can be a latent tactic.

Selma, Alabama, provides another illustration of what I have in mind. In discussing the rationale behind the Selma protest, Dr. Martin Luther King clearly suggests that the movement in Selma, like the movement in Mississippi, was relying on violence to achieve some goal.*

> The goal of the demonstrations in Selma, as elsewhere, is to dramatize the existence of injustice and to bring about the presence of justice.... Long years of experience indicate to us that Negroes can achieve this goal when four things occur:
>
> 1. Nonviolent demonstrators go into the streets to exercise their constitutional rights.
> 2. *Racists resist by unleashing violence against them.*
> 3. Americans of conscience in the name of decency demand federal intervention and legislation.
> 4. The Administration, under mass pressure, initiates measures of immediate intervention and remedial legislation.2

When nonviolent protest does provoke violent retaliation, civil rights leaders know how to capitalize on the situation and turn it to our advantage. But when nonviolence begets nonviolent opposition, this can really frustrate the movement, as I learned firsthand at Selma in the days immediately following the march that turned around. The police then blocked us from marching to the county courthouse. And King's aides followed his example, leading us to the barricades but no further.

We were gripped by a tremendous sense of frustration and futility. I be-

* Federal agents did not define their role as protective, but as "investigative." Still their presence served as a deterrent to violence.

* King, of course, turned the second march around but not until we went to the brink and in his words "made our point, revealing the continued presence of violence, and showing clearly who are the oppressed and who the oppressors."1

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lieve this reaction was caused in large part by the failure of the nonviolent technique to provoke violence. Safety Director Baker headed the police, and they were on their best behavior. They refused to be provoked into violence even when a group of Negro youths broke ranks and charged their line, and Baker readily approved all forms of nonviolent protest such as speeches and prayers. Thus, demonstrators found it impossible to make the police initiate action that the movement could capitalize on. We were forced either to be violent ourselves or to bear the burden of seemingly ineffective nonviolence. And for many this burden was shame—shame because we were just standing there, not getting through, not pushing through, not being beaten, not being arrested, just standing there.

The obvious sign of failure was that we were not getting through to the courthouse. But I think participants also sensed a more subtle sign of failure: the lack of violence. When you turn the other cheek and nobody bothers to slap it, it's hard to believe you are a threat to anyone. Both kinds of failure were articulated by spokesmen for the movement when they announced on the evening of the all-night vigil: "We will tell the police: You must let us through, or you must beat us, tear gas us, or jail us." In essence they were imploring: "You must let nonviolence work, or you must be violent. Give us some sense of effectiveness."

I am not suggesting participants in the movement are attracted to violence for its own sake. But I am suggesting we are consciously and unconsciously drawn toward violence because violence pays dividends for the movement.

First and foremost, it is a powerful catalyst to arouse public opinion. If the 600 Negroes who were tear gassed and beaten in Selma had walked all the way to Montgomery without a violent incident, we would still be awaiting a voting bill. Nor is Selma an isolated case. It was the bombings in Birmingham that forced President Kennedy to submit the historic Civil Rights Bill. The bared fangs of Bull Connor's police dogs—the burning bus of the Freedom Riders—the tear-stained face of Medgar Evers' widow: these are the alarms that awaken the conscience of America.

When bigotry erupts into violence, this dramatizes the everyday plight of the Negro and shows the righteousness of the movement's cause. In the words of Dr. King, the murder of the three civil rights workers was "a grisly and eloquent demonstration to the whole nation of the moral degeneracy upon which segregation rests."[3] Can nonviolence pay such "eloquent" dividends?

Violence is dramatic, and Americans like the dramatic. Mass media will give extensive coverage to violence and threats of violence while they ignore more subtle injustices against the Negro and more subtle attempts to remedy injustice. And the federal government can be forced to intervene in situations of violence while it turns its back on less inflammatory brutality.

But there is more to the attraction of violence than its power to arouse the public at large. Civil rights leaders have other audiences in mind when they march into battle. They are trying

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to arouse the apathetic Negro by showing him that other Negroes would rather stand up in battle than be bent by the yoke of submission. And they are trying to bolster the nerve of the active Negro as well. To quote Dr. King:

> Those who have lived under the corrosive humiliation of daily intimidation are imbued by demonstrations with a sense of courage and dignity that strengthens their personalities. Through demonstrations, Negroes learn that unity and militance have more force than bullets. They find that the bruises of clubs, electric cattle prods and fists hurt less than the scars of submission.[4]

The enemy constitutes still another audience. According to King, "segregationists learn from demonstrations that Negroes who have been taught to fear can also be taught to be fearless."[5]

A further attraction of violence for participants in a nonviolent movement inheres in the fact that violence is the antithesis of nonviolence. Thus, the moral superiority of nonviolence is most graphically displayed in a violent setting.* Nonviolence reaches the height of its legitimacy when it is counterposed with the illegitimacy of naked violence.

Finally, we should recognize that not all participants in the movement are philosophically committed to nonviolence. There is division in the ranks, and this is another pressure toward violence. A sizable number scattered throughout the movement do not believe in nonviolence, either as a principle or a tactic. Even the group that subscribes to nonviolence is divided. Some are committed to it as an end in itself; others view it simply as an expedient tactic. Since the latter have no philosophical attachment to nonviolence, they are more vulnerable to the appeal of violence as a strategy than the committed are. This group and the nonbelievers are constantly pressuring the committed to prove that nonviolence works. Sometimes this pressure forces the committed to exploit violence as a means of gaining symbolic victories for nonviolence. They may hastily involve the movement in a dramatic protest because they know drama has a quick pay-off. Or they may try other means of winning laurels for nonviolence even if they have to throw caution and some principles to the winds. As they are forced to take more and more chances, violence as risk becomes violence as certainty.

I felt the pressure on the leaders in Selma when nonviolence appeared to be ineffective. The situation was so tense and the youngsters were so eager to take on the police that King's aides had to respond to the dissatisfaction. They made several frantic attempts to show that nonviolence works. On at least two occasions they sent small groups to the courthouse by evasive routes to stage a demonstration. One venture came within a hair of trigger-

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* Some participants in the movement may be drawn into battle for more personal reasons: to prove to themselves and others that they are pacifists out of principle rather than fear or to prove they are truly committed to nonviolence. Thus, Charles Mauldin, a teen-age leader, wants a chance to be tested. He says, "It's easy to talk about non-violence, but in a lot of cases you've got to be tested, and re-inspire yourself."[6]

The movement actually increases the attraction of violence by reserving the greatest acclaim for those who have braved it.

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ing mob violence. But the leaders could say to their critics that they had succeeded in getting past the police nonviolently.

I am not suggesting that the violence of white segregationists always pays dividends for the movement. The impact on the public at large depends in part on the character of the victim. The brutalizing of whites arouses much more attention and anger than the brutalizing of Negroes. Violence which rallies national sentiment behind the movement can tear a local community apart and freeze positions, so that it becomes more difficult to win localized demands. Even on a national level, a given type of violence seems to pay diminishing returns. Tear gas in Selma outraged the nation, but only three weeks later smoke bombs in Camden went practically unnoticed. Does the American public have a rising degree of tolerance for violence? If so, there must be an escalation of violence to get the same effect. This may be an unforeseen consequence of using the dramatic protest to arouse public opinion.

The strategy of the movement in this country raises a very important question: Does a movement which is dedicated to nonviolence as *the* means of action and reaction inherently need violence to sustain it? The evidence suggests that it does. I remember what Reverend Andrew Young, one of King's top aides, said in Browns Chapel as he reflected on the fact that Safety Director Baker was a nonviolent police chief. He said that the Bakers really thwart the movement but that the Bull Connors and Jim Clarks play into its hands and give it momentum.

The philosophy of nonviolent struggle seems in part to be predicated on the idea that there will be violence against the movement. The success of nonviolent struggle may require that this prophecy be fulfilled. Thus, we who are involved may be captives of a social dynamic, without necessarily being aware of the forces acting upon us. I still hear the words of the parade captain I spoke to in the march that turned around. As we followed the leaders back to Selma, he vociferously declared:

> "We should have kept marching right through the troopers!"
>
> "And what price are you willing to pay to keep marching?" I asked. "One life? Ten lives? A hundred?"
>
> "No lives," he replied. "No lives."

Did he really mean "no lives"? Or was he refusing to admit even to himself that the nonviolent movement often thrives on violence? Perhaps he was refusing to admit something even more important—that he is disillusioned with the nonviolent approach to winning battles.

The violence of white segregationists may be necessary to sustain the nonviolent movement, but it may not be sufficient. If the public and the government do not respond to that violence, and what it represents, with enough indignation and power to change the Negro's inhuman condition to a human one—then the Negro and his white allies will totally abandon nonviolence as a principle and strategy. Already we see the emergence of the Deacons, an armed league of Negroes pledged to using violence in self-defense. And we see the nonviolent movement wrestling with its conscience

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and struggling to cope with the attitudes represented by the Deacons. Pressured by the reality of life, the movement has already embraced the tactic of capitalizing on violence and the tactic of provoking it. To sustain itself, will it now be forced to sanction the use of violence in self-defense? What is the next step?

1 King, Martin Luther, Jr. "Behind the Selma March," *Saturday Review*, April 3, 1965, p. 17.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 16. (Italics added)
3 King, Martin Luther, Jr. "Let Justice Roll Down," *The Nation*, March 15, 1965, p. 271.
4 *Ibid.*, p. 270.
5 *Ibid.*
6 Adler, Renata. "Letter From Selma," *The New Yorker*, April 10, 1965, p. 138.

Jonathan Myrick Daniels

"But My Heart Is Black"

Episcopal Seminarian Jonathan Myrick Daniels was shot dead at Hayneville, Alabama, near Selma, on Friday, August 20, 1965. The man accused and tried for the murder was freed by a Hayneville jury—all white, of course. This article, of which we reprint only an excerpt, was written in April for publication in the Journal of the Episcopal Theological Seminary of Cambridge, Mass. The full text appears in the June issue of the diocesan magazine of the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire.

We drove on into the night. Incongruously, we came upon an all-night truck-stop, midway to nowhere. . . . I discovered hatred hadn't advertised—perhaps the sign had blown off in a storm. . . . I turned from cold stares and fixed my gaze on a sign over the counter. "ALL CASH RECEIVED FROM SALES TO NIGERS WILL BE SENT DIRECTLY TO THE UNITED KLANS OF AMERICA." I read it again and again, nausea rising swiftly and savagely, as the suspicious counter boy spilled coffee over the cups. It was lousy coffee. But worse than chicory was the taste of black men's blood. It was cheap: only twenty-five cents. At least Judas went for thirty.

It was high noon as we walked into the Selma Post Office to sign for a registered letter and the lines at the windows were long. In the line next to me a redneck turned and stared: at my seminarian's collar, at my ESCRU* button, at my face. He turned to a friend. "Know what he is?" The friend shouted "No." Resuming, the speaker whined. "Why, he's a white niggah." I was not happy thus to become the object of every gaze. And yet deep within me rose an affirmation and a tenderness and a joy that wanted to shout. Yes! If pride were appropriate in the ambiguities of my presence in Selma, I should be unspeakably proud of my title. For it is the highest honor, the most precious distinction I have ever received. It is one that I do not deserve—and cannot ever earn. As I type now, my hands are hopelessly white. "But my *heart* is black. . . ."

* The Episcopal Society for Cultural and Rcial Unity.

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BOOKS

Stephan Thernstrom

The Intellectual in Mass Society

THE NEW RADICALISM IN AMERICA, 1889–1963; THE INTELLECTUAL AS A SOCIAL TYPE, by Christopher Lasch. Alfred A. Knopf. 349 pp. $6.95.

This is an exciting book—though not at all the book its title seems to promise. "The New Radicalism" is a phrase woefully ill-suited to characterize so diverse and bizarre a cast of characters as Jane Addams, Randolph Bourne, Mabel Dodge Luhan, Colonel Edward M. House, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Norman Mailer. Mr. Lasch uses "liberalism" and "radicalism" interchangeably, on the curious grounds that "in the heyday of the new radicalism, men of advanced social opinions had used the terms 'socialism,' 'radicalism,' 'liberalism,' and 'progressivism' with a certain disregard of their various shades of meaning." He is interested not in radicalism as a tradition of disciplined, ideological politics, but rather in a complex of ideas and emotions common to a great many men and women "of advanced social opinions" in twentieth century America, ideas and emotions which can only loosely be described as "radical." Nor is the "1889–1963" of the title, intended perhaps as a concession to the appetite of the reading public for contemporary subjects, a fair index of the book's contents; fully two thirds of *The New Radicalism in America* deals with the period before 1920. And the subtitle, "the intellectual as a social type," suggests a sociological concern with such problems as that of generalizing from particular intellectuals to the class, which is in fact conspicuously absent.

What Mr. Lasch gives us is a gallery of sparkling portraits of a host of discontented Americans, woven together by sometimes disjointed, sometimes misleading general observations about the larger social setting in which they operated. If this yields far from a systematic analysis either of "the emergence of the intellectual as a social type" or of what most of us think of as "American radicalism," it does nonetheless provide a fascinating and illuminating survey of some of the dilemmas of the intellectual in a mass society. Lasch is one of the first American historians to explicitly employ the concept of "mass society," relating the struggles of his characters to the growing fragmentation of the society in which they lived, tracing their revulsion against "the tendency of the mass society to break down into

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its component parts, each having its own autonomous culture and maintaining only the most tenuous connections with the general life of the society—which as a consequence has almost ceased to exist." In the opening decades of the twentieth century, Lasch argues, the fragmentation of American society increasingly set the intellectuals apart from the old middle class from which most of them sprung, and gave them a sense of themselves as a distinct social group. This led to "a cultural crisis," a revolt against "that combination of patriarchal authority and the sentimental veneration of women which is the essence of the genteel tradition." To these origins Lasch traces a number of the defining traits various of his subjects display: their eager identification with outcast groups, be they workers, immigrants, Negroes, or Indians; their longing to be politically "relevant," whatever the price; their "confusion of politics and culture"; their excessive politicizing of cultural issues and simultaneous propounding of nonpolitical solutions for essentially political problems.

Lasch's selection of presumably "archetypal" characters is very much open to challenge, given his intention to generalize about "American radicalism," and there is the further difficulty that not all of the men and women on display here embody all of these traits. If Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., for instance, hungers for political influence, he can hardly be accused of feeling any deep kinship with oppressed minorities. Lasch makes no systematic attempt to isolate clusters of these traits, to define subtypes of the species "radical," and to explain these variations in terms of his general thesis. Despite its title, the book doesn't begin to fulfill this aim. Nor does Lasch's interest in "the intellectual as a social type" lead him to any scrutiny of the relationship between the intellectuals and the rank and file in the history of American social protest—in the Socialist party in the age of Debs, in the IWW, in the industrial unions of the thirties. For a careful investigation of the social context which shaped these movements Lasch has substituted deductions from the theory of mass society. I would concede, therefore, Mike Harrington's point that the book is disappointingly narrow and hermetic, and William Phillips' complaint that it is confused.

What, then, remains to rescue it? A good deal, I think. *The New Radicalism* should be read as a collection of dazzling fragments, superbly-written vignettes of people we know or should know: a sensitive account of what brought Jane Addams to the slums of Chicago; some shrewd observations on the pre-World War I feminist movement; two superb chapters on Randolph Bourne and Mabel Dodge Luhan as prophets of "the experimental life"; a biting analysis of the ambivalence of *The New Republic* over American entry into World War I, with the development of a liberal "cult of the hard-boiled" and the debasement of pragmatism into a political religion; a probing but surprisingly appreciative portrait of Lincoln Steffens; a long, brilliant concluding chapter which neatly dissects the cold war liberalism of Niebuhr, Sidney Hook and Schlesinger, Jr., and the intellectual establishment of the fifties

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and sixties. Lasch includes as well profiles of Dwight Macdonald and Norman Mailer which are intended to illuminate the difficulties of the radical in our era; followers of DISSENT may find these sections harsh, perhaps unfair, but they seem close to the bone to me.

The characters who appear on Lasch's stage are driven as much by their own inner conflicts as by the injustices "out there" in the world, and I suspect that some of us on the left will find it all too easy to dismiss Lasch as a parlor psychoanalyst. There are places where the author's zeal to penetrate the psyches of his subjects and to generalize their neuroses does seem excessive, especially in Chapter 7, "Lincoln Colcord and Colonel House: Dreams of Terror and Utopia," where a minor insight is made the occasion of a lengthy, pretentious clinical exercise. But it is noteworthy that *The New Radicalism* displays none of the conservative bias which

FOR THAT BELATED CHRISTMAS GIFT OR TO START THE NEW YEAR RIGHT

RIDDLE:

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Because it is for the Christmas spirit and against the bourgeois spirit.

(Please read the following choices carefully and check one for yourself or as a gift):

A. You get NEW AMERICA twice a month for a year for $2.00 (regular price $4.00).

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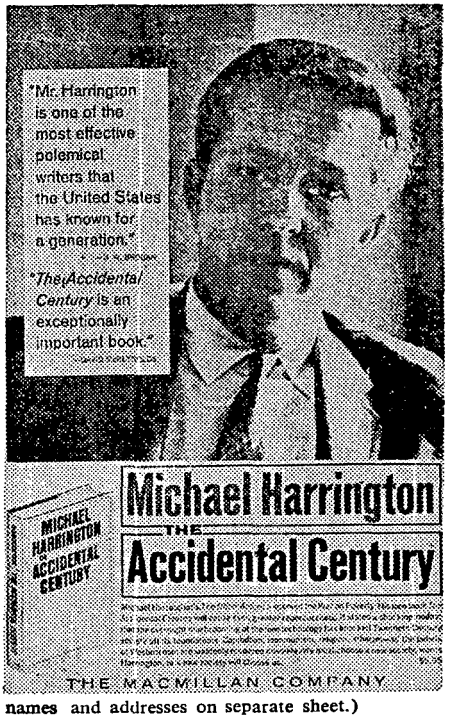
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pervaded Richard Hofstadter's use of much the same method to reexamine Populism, Progressivism and the New Deal. After his pungent, truly radical reappraisal of American reform in *The American Political Tradition* (1948), Hofstadter shifted his ground in a highly symptomatic fashion. The experience of McCarthyism generated in Hofstadter and many another American intellectual a new Stevensonian complacency about our legal and constitutional heritage, a deep fear of "working class authoritarianism," and a Freudian suspicion of the motives of reformers who challenged the established order and excited the unruly passions of The Mob. These prejudices were given the sanction of academic sociology in Daniel Bell's *The New American Right* (1955); they entered the mainstream of American historical writing via Hofstadter's *The Age of Reform* (1955). Lasch is a former student of Hofstadter's at Columbia, and he writes in a very similar vein, but from a quite different perspective, a perspective which suggests how quickly the younger generation has left behind "the cult of ideology." If he casts a cold eye on the failings of the men and women with whom he deals, he casts a still colder eye on the society they struggled to change. This is not an utterly despairing book—some of Lasch's keenest remarks are aimed at fatalists of the left and right alike—but it is a profoundly critical one. Lasch's harsh appraisal of radical intellectuals is intended not to impugn or stifle radical social criticism, but to stimulate more effective social criticism. Let us hope it succeeds.

Harlem, His Harlem

MANCHILD IN THE PROMISED LAND, by Claude Brown. Macmillan. 415 pp. $5.95.

Claude Brown speaks straight from the Harlem dead end. He is able to reproduce what no one quite has before: the sensation that there really isn't anywhere further to go. In the South, working a cotton field twelve hours a day for $3, living in a shack on grits and Koolaid, a man and his family look to the promised land: "one no longer had to wait to get to heaven to lay his burden down; burdens could be laid down in New York." Already a son has gone ahead to find a place and work, and one by one the others follow. But there is nothing North, only more of the same and worse: they come to an end of hope. This society can crush its white children too, but it doesn't always get at their hope. How does anyone possessing this most basic of human resources understand anyone without it?

Claude Brown was bequeathed no sense of the possible beyond a beating, a police court, Bellevue, the re-

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formatory. In between encounters with Justice he played hookey, stole, fought, pushed pot, sniffed cocaine, played the Murphy, and went through the range of choice that Harlem offers its young. But somewhere in the middle he was sent to the Wiltwyck School, whose influence in general and director, Ernst Papanek, in particular, seemed to plant an idea of another world—an idea which stayed dormant for some years more while he spent three terms in a reformatory. He came of age to a future of "going the crime way, that's all there is to it. I'd be going to jail soon, and I'd be doing a lot of time." Brown knew that if he pursued "the crime way" past the age of 16, his permanent police record would make him unhireable. Then, a sudden change, apparently resulting from a brief visit to Wiltwyck. Touched by Papanek's belief in him, he left Harlem and began night school. He studied, played piano, read, talked, went out with a white girl, and revisited Harlem. Old friends there were now thieves, addicts, prostitutes, or in jail—"strung out," busted, or dead of an overdose. Heroin, "the plague" from which there was no escape, caught even his brother Pimp, even Sugar, the girl who was straight.

Brown tells us exactly how it happens, and it all fits, there is nothing unreasonable about the choices people make when given these alternatives. Presented with the raw material from which they spring, the reader has no trouble understanding riots. Brown's Harlem is the underside of the world we inhabit, the equal and opposite reaction to the approved majority way. Claude Brown's escape will give no clues to city planners: it is important principally because he is able to become our witness. Neither he nor any Harlem expert could diagnose that illness which is so urgently sought —the one that is curable through some sort of local anesthetic. We all know as well as he does, if we really want to know, that the disease is not confined to a limb of the body politic, but afflicts us all.

Manchild is a beautiful record of experience—not a substitute for life or for fiction, not a tract nor an explanation. It is built, as much as written, of passion and immediacy, surrounding the reader until he lives inside its life. From within you can see out to where you started and be appalled. You can also emerge still fixed in the same armchair, just as white.

One wonders at the series of strange reactions to the book. Brown has written an extraordinary document; he has also received an excessive sum of money for it, and inordinate coverage in the media. Book clubs immediately want *Manchild* and a university wanted the author for writer-in-residence. Television shows, maybe a movie. Liberal critics approached their task with generosity and a pent-up store of sociological warmth. Even Tom Wolfe got sent to Harlem, so obviously antithetical to the Tom Wolfe scene. The public noises were quick and loud, and not quite real. Perhaps some of the attention sprang from guilt as much as appreciation, as if the cash were somehow conscience money, given to Brown instead of to SNCC or whoever's silence one sought that month.

Not everyone was in favor. *Time*

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sneered briefly, and Paul Goodman wondered why "Claude," as a member of the group which has the "*only* . . . chance for a free and exciting early education" (his italics), should turn out "stupid." For his critics, it was not enough for Brown to come out of there and tell how it was, he should have erected and evaluated a whole complex of causes and cures. He should have possessed a larger vocabulary, a greater political commitment, the perspective of history, a True Writer's sense of organization. Brown, however, neither apologizes nor explains nor competes with the experts in the answer game. It doesn't seem to occur to them that what *he* gets from his experience of Harlem might not be what *they* seek; that though his book is seen sociologically by outsiders since that is the outside "set" on Harlem now, Brown himself might view his life in simpler terms. Because his life, after all, was all his and all he had: he loved and hated in it, suffered and tried, and it was a lot worse to live through than to look at, like all other-people's lives. Others in the bag with Brown should be given his book to judge. The rest of us have only ourselves to judge. SALLY BELFRAGE

Overkill: Causes and Consequences

OUR DEPLETED SOCIETY, by Seymour Melman. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965. 366 pp. $5.95.

Seymour Melman's book is a bit disconcerting. It is repetitious, at times it screams at the reader, and it is seriously wanting in sustained analysis. What Melman needed most was a good editor.

The recurrent theme is that American emphasis on *overkill* has resulted in a redundant stockpile of nuclear weapons and a gross misallocation of our resources away from the public and private sectors of the economy. This morbid obsession with overkill has, in Melman's view, distorted our values, increased the influence of the military-industrial complex, worsened the relative productivity position of the U.S. in the world economy, increased the degree of alienation in our society, disoriented the young by facing them with a "no future" prospect, and severely warped the imbalance between the public and private sectors in favor of the latter. It has, furthermore, intimidated the free expresssion of ideas and brought on a dramatic decline in responsible social criticism. In short, whatever is wrong with contemporary American society can be directly attributed to one thing—our preoccupation with overkill.

There is, of course, some merit to this exaggerated argument, though I think some of the problems he cites are a cause rather than an effect of overkill. At any rate, he places too great an

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explanatory burden on his *theory* of overkill. It is important that a distinction be made between the extent of overkill and Melman's theory of it. In the early chapters of this book the amount of overkill is convincingly documented, but what is not so convincing is Melman's attempt to show that our defense expenditures have sapped and depleted the industrial base of our economy. He illustrates his thesis of depletion with the general deterioration of the shipping, machine-tool (a great favorite of Melman's), typewriter, railroad, and sewing-machine industries. But despite these limited examples (there is more to the American economy than the industries he cites), Melman has not *proven* the inferiority and non-competitiveness of the American economy. His technique could as easily be used to "prove" the inferiority of any and all economies since no country is simultaneously proficient in all fields of economic endeavor. At times Melman gives the impression that imports are un-American, and on the basis of his argument one must consider it a wonder that the U.S. has continued to realize a healthy surplus in its balance of trade, as distinct from its balance of payments.

Melman is as faulty in his analysis as those who are in a state of panic over the threat of automation. And, like Daniel Bell, I must apply to Melman what Bell did to the automation peddlers—namely, the old Jewish proverb, "For example is not a proof." I would not want for a moment to minimize the perverse effect of our defense expenditures on the economy, but I cannot accept the sloppiness of Melman's analysis. His is the approach of the industrial engineer and not that of the professionally trained economist. Melman would have been better advised to shift his emphasis to the low rate of economic growth since the end of the Korean War (as compared to the European experience) and then go on to examine the effect of defense expenditures on the fixed investment ratio and its persistent overall decline in the postwar period. In short, Melman does not provide us with a balanced analysis. His case may have some merit, but his methodology is woefully inadequate. And without a balanced account, his plea to rejuvenate the depleted industries is not at all convincing.

The one place where Melman does make a strong point is on the social costs of overkill. Though he does not separate capital items from recurrent operating expenditures, he estimates that our current needs for housing, health care, education, urban renewal, pollution control, and the like, amount to $314 billion. If we were to decide to redress these imbalances in the public sector over a ten-year period (Melman unrealistically uses a five-year period), this would require an annual non-defense expenditure of $31 billion —or roughly 60 per cent of our annual defense budget. And since Melman estimates that at least 40 per cent of the defense budget is for purposes of overkill, this is not an unreasonable figure to shoot at—provided, of course, that we could convince Congress and the Administration to cut back the defense budget by this amount and reallocate the funds to investment in social capital. If Melman's figures are correct, they serve to describe the wide gap between the rhetoric of the Great

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Society and the paltry funds that have so far been allocated for its implementation.

Throughout this book Melman raises critical problems, examines them at excessive length, and then gets frightened when considering their policy solutions. He tends to see government and freedom as opposite ends of a see-saw. When the role of government goes up, freedom is destined to go down. The iron law of oligarchy seems uppermost in his mind and succeeds in pushing him toward decentralized solutions on the state and local levels, autonomous international organizations, and the general checks-and-balances approach that so plagues social thought in this country. In short, Melman is radical in his criticisms and conservative in his solutions. Yet credit must be given to Melman for his courage in tackling these problems at a time when the more adequately trained social scientists are busy counting privies or cranking *wertfrei* models of reality.

The interested reader can save himself the chore of wading through this overly padded book by jumping directly to the statement by Senator George McGovern of South Dakota—which Melman has conveniently provided as an Appendix to his book. Senator McGovern says succinctly in 17 pages what it took 285 pages for Melman to do. STEPHEN ROUSSEAS

"Populism" and Totalitarianism in the Emergent Nations

THE THIRD WORLD, by Peter Worsley. University of Chicago Press, 317 pp. $5.50.

Peter Worsley, who holds the chair of sociology at Manchester, has written an admirable social-democratic manifesto for underdeveloped countries. Having just tried my own hand at dealing with this topic—a survey of the "Third World" and the prescription of new policies—I know well the problems which he faced. Though Worsley is a leader of England's "New Left" and I adhere to more conventional liberal principles, we arrive at essentially the same convictions concerning the emerging nations.

Perhaps we are witnessing the spontaneous growth of a new school of thought on this matter: an approach which, while recognizing the multitude of obstacles, stresses that democracy in some form can flourish in the "Third World" and that economic growth need not require a stringent autocracy. Arthur Lewis, the doyen of "development economists," Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, and K. A. Busia, formerly head of the opposition in Ghana, have in their recent writings also come to the defense of democratic principles in the emerging countries. Like Wors-

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ley, they reject the prevalent opinion that totalitarianism is the only political form appropriate for developing nations. And, like Worsley, they have undermined the arguments presented by both imperialists and certain social scientists that non-Western man is incapable of developing a free society.

Worsley begins by pointing out that "until our day, human society has never existed." One result of Western intervention in the Third World was to create a common world civilization: "Imperialism brought about the consolidation of the world as a single social system." Most importantly, peasants have been shaken from their traditional patterns and molded into a revolutionary force. "Imperialism brought into being its own 'gravedigger', not merely by revolutionizing production and creating new social classes, but by transforming the total conditions of life even of the peasantry, that mass which ultimately might otherwise have remained an outside spectator." Until recently, only Mao Tse-tung, by turning Marx on his head, recognized this most fundamental change in 20th century life.

Drawing on the experience of areas as diverse as Egypt and Nigeria, Indonesia and Senegal, Worsley traces the forces which brought the "European interlude" to its end. And he demonstrates why the Western varieties of Marxism, Social Democracy, and classical liberalism failed to offer relevant solutions to nationalists aspiring for independence.

Worsley believes that "populism" is the political formula best fitted to the needs of developing nations (or, more generally, suited to an agrarian society where class divisions have not yet strongly appeared). The "populist" is one who asserts that there are no irreparable divisions in his society and that an organic, undifferentiated society requires only a single political organization. Worsley describes the manifestations of this doctrine in North America and its various forms in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. He notes, too, that "populism" may take on a rightist coloration (as in Peronism) or may be oriented to the left (as in Ghana).

Worsley recognizes many of the dangers inherent in "populism." He describes, among other relevant illustrations, the lunatic extravagances which a populist one-party rule has occasioned in parts of ex-French Africa. Senegal, for example, has appropriated 10 million francs to build a palace for a *regional* legislature in the town of Tambacounda. Yet, only 8 million francs were devoted in the same year to the development of production in the entire nation.

While Worsley concedes that "populist" rule may turn into a regime of terror, he nonetheless holds out a cautious hope that "populism" may still, under some conditions, retain the most important protections for individual freedom. Particularly in Africa, indigenous democratic conditions may forbid the creation of a truly totalitarian state. Worsley cites, to good effect, the opinions of Julius Nyerere who, despite his profound understanding of Western democracy and his unquestioned commitment to individual freedom, has still felt compelled to foster the emergence of a one-party state in Tanzania.

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"Overwhelming social unity has its dangers," Nyerere carefully warned, at the moment when he fostered a one-party regime. The danger lies in "the possible exclusion of the eccentric, the one who does not conform to the social mores. It is by the existence of a place for the 'odd man out' that a newly independent country can be judged to be fully democratic. He must not only be allowed to live without any restriction on his personal freedom; but he must be able to contribute to his society through his work and ideas."

As Worsley points out, men like Nyerere wish to preserve the *principles* of liberal democracy while abandoning specific *institutions* which they regard as unworkable in their societies. "The new populism *could* become the source of a revived humanist internationalism," Worsley says, but "it *could* just as easily disappear, just as Russian populism gave way to Bolshevism." The issue is the same now as it was in Russia: "Does 'modernization' . . . inevitably entail rigid mobilization and 'forced marches' for the development of heavy industry?"

Worsley ends his important book by condemning the use of Western power in defense of dictatorships such as South Viet Nam's: "future historians may well conclude that while Stalin successfully kept the Communists out of power in Afro-Asia, the State Department put them in." And he proposes two constructive ways to promote economic growth in developing nations: by increasing the degree of economic cooperation between the emergent countries themselves (somewhat unlikely, he concedes) and by expanding the role of world organizations in international development.

I have nothing but admiration for this fine book, although in regard to a complex subject there are bound to be disagreements. I find it difficult, for example, to accept Worsley's assertion that, "the prime content of colonial political rule was economic exploitation." Surely, this generalization holds true for, say, the Dutch in Indonesia. Yet it is hard to reconcile this view with certain other facts: the

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French spent more money on their colonies than ever returned to the "Metropolitan" ruler; missionaries, abolitionists, military strategists, and simple adventurers played as important a role in English expansion as did capitalists; and Germany's flirtation with colonies was far more a flexing of nationalist muscles than a profit-oriented activity. (In a somewhat contradictory fashion, Worsley admits that " 'Glory' has certainly been an independent variable of major significance in recent colonial history.")

On a more important level, I am worried that Worsley may underestimate the potential for totalitarianism inherent in "populism." He apparently believes that ethnic and other divisions will prevent emerging countries from developing pure "monocentric" states. For him, in fact, totalitarianism is a "logical impossibility." He notes that even Nazism (one variety of "populism?") was subject to fights between contending groups and could hardly be considered a truly unified state. Yet, does this caveat about the supposedly monolithic nature of Nazi Germany really matter? Despite its internal disunities, Nazism *did* succeed in massacring millions of its opponents.

If one destroys the institutional base for democracy, what guarantee (other than the good will of a very mortal man like Nyerere) can an emerging country have that the principles of freedom will be maintained? Clearly, many "populist" states, such as Ghana and Egypt, simply mask or surpress basic conflicts within the society which will, as in Indonesia at the moment, eventually come to the surface. Is it not, then, wiser to follow India and Nigeria's example and attempt to build a set of institutions which will channel these conflicts peacefully, rather than trying to achieve that "organically unified society" which "populism" postulates?

Peter Worsley has not tried to outguess history. He recognizes, as few social scientists do, the complexity of society, the stubbornly idiosyncratic nature of man, and the indeterminancy of human destiny. It is exactly this refreshing quality which distinguishes his book from the usual scholarly literature on the "third world." "From our analysis," he modestly concludes, "we have not projected any 'inevitable trends' into the future. For there are no 'inevitable trends.' Quite simply, we can choose."

WILLIAM R. MCCORD

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LETTERS

Purpose in Literature

Editors:

Lionel Abel ["What Is Literature?" DISSENT 1965] identifies some of the weaknesses in Sartre's *What is Literature?*, but I think many of his own arguments are false, trite, and illogical.

Quoting approvingly Joyce's writer-hero Rowan, who says "I don't take my ideas from other people," Mr. Abel defends the writer's need and right to "be at one with his ideal." Apparently, what he means by this is that the writer must be free to do as he wishes. This independence makes literature "an entirely different vocation" from politics.

But, in fact, this fierce individualism of and for the artist—not an original idea, of course, with Mr. Abel *or* Joyce—is a good illustration of the dependence of the artist-intellectual on the aesthetic and moral commonplaces of his society. Anyone who follows the development of Western literary culture for the past two hundred years can see the role that *idées reçues* and the social framework have played. The right to be at one with his ideal is merely one form of bourgeois individualism, and, except in a legal sense, the writer is not and should not be independent.

On the contrary, art, like politics, is based on human values. The talented artist has command of a powerful instrument for reinforcing and inhabiting certain values in his audience, especially when, as in our age, values are being so desperately sought.

Given the artist's potential power and the crucial urgency of moral (including political) issues, I think Sartre, however questionable his particular arguments, is right to insist that the artist engage himself. We badly need a critical school that accepts and defends the socio-political consequences of literature . . . Of course it is understood that the individual writer is still "free" to resist the suggestions of Sartre or a critical pressure group—and to write as he pleases. Sartre certainly doesn't envision a culture commissar who would censor "unhealthy" or decadent books . . .

Mr. Abel's arguments boil down to a defense of "mystery" in literature. He doesn't define this "mystery" or "earthness" satisfactorily, beyond listing several "greats" in whom he finds it. First of all, I see no reason to believe that the power of Poe or of Shakespeare or Flaubert is somehow basically due to the same indefinable element (setting aside the important question, whether an artist is good because he is powerful). Secondly, to accuse Sartre of wanting to expunge this mysterious element is absurd. How would anyone set out to remove something that is by definition ineffable and elusive? His aim is not "to eliminate from literature any element of or reference to the earth," whatever that means, or to make literature "entirely rational and purposive." No one could do that. But to the extent that literature can be purposive—and I think this is greater than Mr. Abel implies—the question of proper and improper purposes is fair game.

ANDREW HAWLEY

No Controversy

Editors:

I should like to make three comments on "American Intervention and the Cold War," by John Schrecker and Michael Walzer (DISSENT, Autumn 1965).

First, I find it wholly admirable. I completely agree with the authors' condemnation of the Cold War and its ever-growing myopia, obsessiveness, and futility. I share their theme that "it is time to bring our policemen home. Our country and the rest of the world will be no less safe when we do." And I am impressed by the fresh way they look at the Third World and the meaning of "modernization"—quite unlike the usual western parochialism.

I disagree on just one point. Today modernization looms no less large than modernity, and the Third World is no less important than the Old World. However, they are not more important, either. I am not at all sanguine these days about what the Old World can offer, be

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it capitalist or communist. Yet much of our future lies there, not only materially or diplomatically but also intellectually and morally. The case Schrecker and Walzer make for a new U.S. policy can and should be applied to the Old World, too.

Finally, I was struck by how the editors of DISSENT labelled this article on the cover. They called it "controversial." My own position was for many years strongly and actively anti-Communist, and then I would have thought the article debatable indeed. But I now feel that we have no hope at all for change and progress until we give up Communism as a central issue. DISSENT cannot begin to do that as long as it views articles like this as more "controversial" than any other.

I have come to value greatly the democratic socialist outlook of DISSENT. In our time it is a rare and prescious thing. Yet on the Cold War and anti-Communism many of us badly need some revisionism. Here the Schrecker-Walzer article stands out as a big step in the right direction.

GEORGE FISCHER

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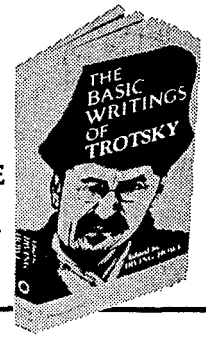

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